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REVIEWS: **AMW LAB/WIRELESS ROUTERS** iPhone 3G **REMOTE FOR iPhone** PENTAX K20D
NIKON COOLPIX P80 **PACEMAKER DJ** RAPIDWEAVER 4.0 **TOPXNOTES**

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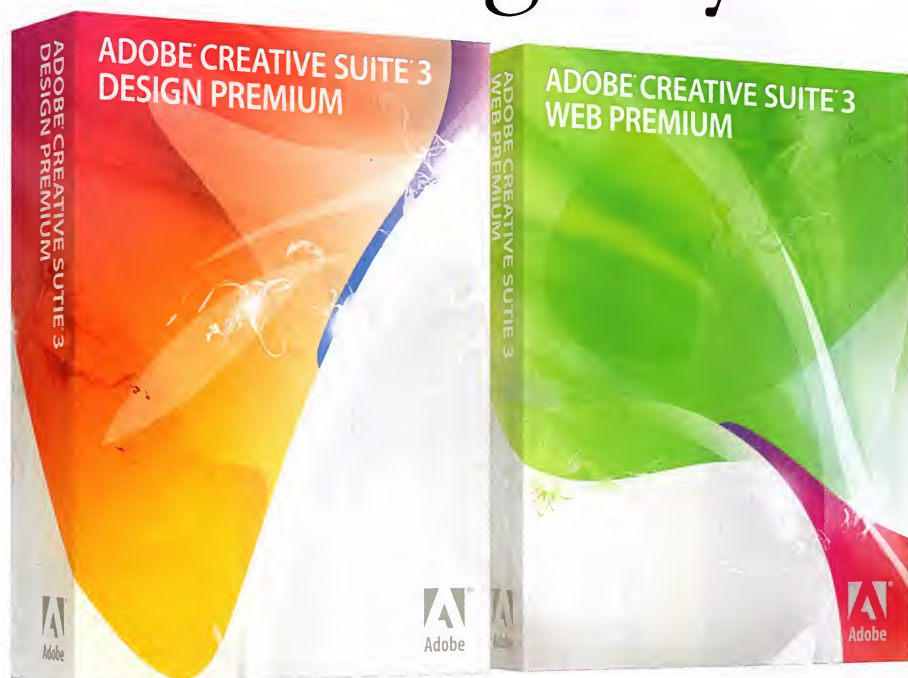
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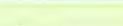
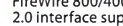
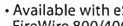
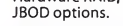
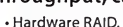
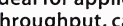
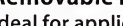
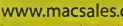
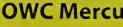
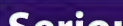
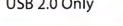
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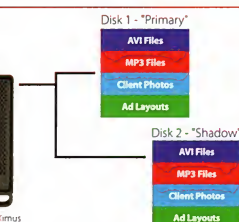
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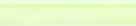
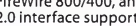
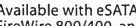
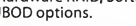
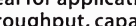
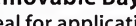
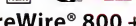
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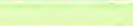
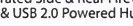
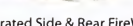
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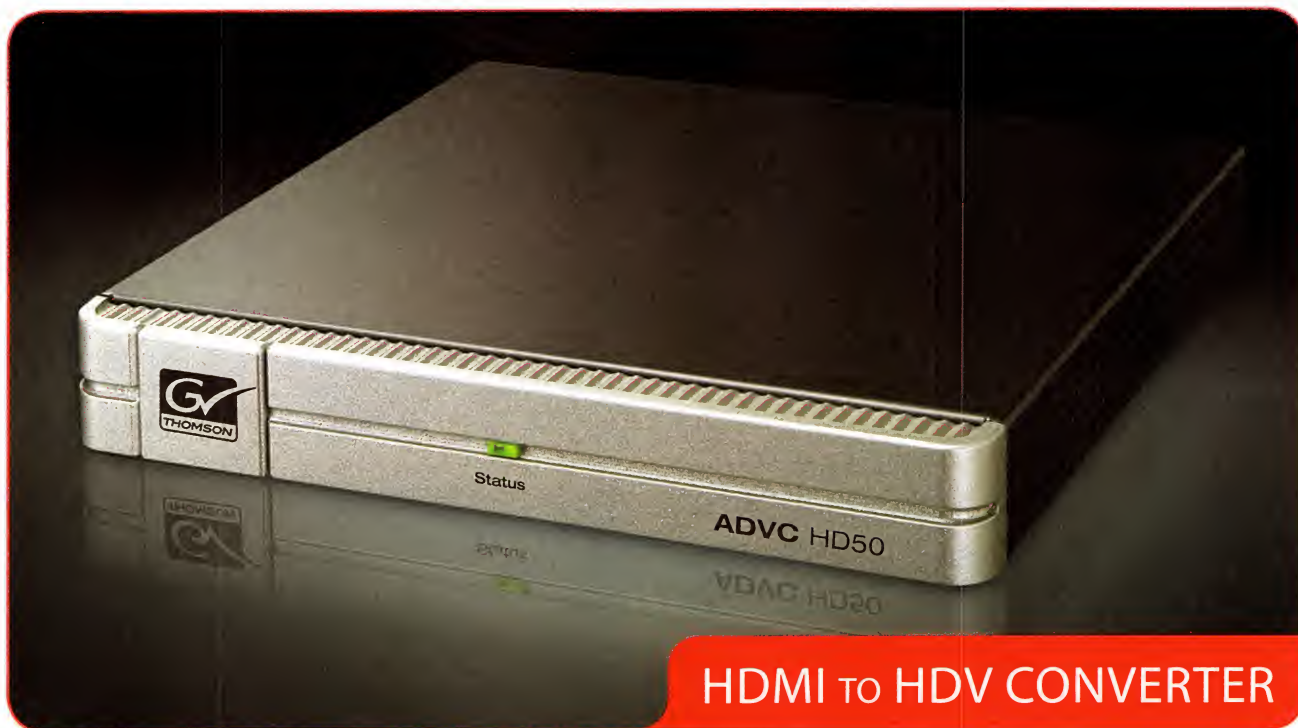
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⌘-A

012 Matthew JC. Powell

Aussie telcos, face your consequences

⌘-V

015 AMW readers

A few readers had some Mac difficulties this past month and would like to share their stories.

⌘-I

034 Fleur Doidge

All about Nolobe

⌘-Y

044 Martin Levins

Photoshop Elements training in all its guises

⌘-O

064 Keith White

The latest computer books

⌘-Q

082 Alex Kidman

Can technology be allergic to humans?

⌘-N

019 The month in review.

Apple Store opens in Sydney, 3G iPhone hits the market — hard, App Store debuts, .Mac transforms into MobileMe, TV shows arrive on Australia's iTunes Store and the price of the MacBook Air gets slashed. Yeah, not much happening in the Mac market at the moment ...

022 MUG events for August.

027 Off the Net

⌘-1

029 Openers, closers and lower-thirds

Danny Gorog

Adding titles and credits to a video production adds professional polish as well as communicating valuable information to your audience. But there's more to it than just slapping some text on screen.

⌘-2

036 Return of the clones

Rob Griffiths

With the transition to Intel processors across Apple's line, it's now possible to build your own computer capable of running Mac OS X from off-the-shelf parts. But should you? We put a DIY kit and a Psystar Open Computer up against the real thing.





⌘-?

- 047** Save time, type less
- 049** Quickly create new tabs in Safari
- 050** Run apps in X11
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⌘-J

- 069** AMW lab:
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Billion BiPAC 7300N
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NewerTechnology MAXRange
⌘⌘⌘ 1/2

072 iPhone 3G

Does it live up to the hype?

⌘⌘⌘

074 Remote for iPhone

Must-have app for iPhone users

⌘⌘⌘ 1/2

075 TopXNotes 1.3

Sets itself apart from the pack

⌘⌘⌘

076 Nikon Coolpix P80

Startling at the price

⌘⌘⌘⌘

076 Pentax K20D

Idiot-proof DSLR

⌘⌘⌘⌘ 1/2

077 RapidWeaver 4.0

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⌘⌘⌘⌘ 1/2

078 Pacemaker DJ

Feel the beat

⌘⌘⌘





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Matthew JC. Powell has a deep and abiding passion for the Mac, the magazine and its readers — in no particular order.

Smack!

The above headline is intended for whomever it was at Telstra and Vodafone who decided to keep the pricing plans for iPhone 3G secret until the last possible second. Consider it administered, as they say, "upside the head". Optus could also have come out with its info a little earlier, but it at least gave customers a solid week to pore over the plans.

And Apple shouldn't escape the smackings either, if only because its own coy behaviour in the leadup to the iPhone's release served to encourage the secrecy on the part of telcos. Two days before the thing went on sale, I was still getting "we haven't made an announcement yet" in answer to the simple question "will the iPhone be sold at the Sydney Apple Store". Hold out your hand — *this is going to hurt you more than it hurts me*.

The iPhone 3G is, in some ways, like a new *Star Wars* movie. The fan base is already there, the hype is virtually self-perpetuating, and it really doesn't much matter what the critics say, it's going to have a big opening weekend. Everyone involved knew that, and to my mind took advantage.

In Telstra's case particularly, I can't help feeling that if the iPhone data plans had been publicised a week in advance there would not have been many people queued up outside T-life shops. Instead, the final plans were announced the day the device went on sale, so people who'd queued since the wee small hours were signed up before they'd even fully gained consciousness.

You could say, and many have, that no-one was holding a gun to anyone's head and saying you have to buy on day one. More than a few people said "sit back and wait a few days or even weeks, and check out the plans. Don't sign anything until you're sure". *Time* magazine also said *The Phantom Menace* was kind of dull, but it made a billion bucks anyway.

Likewise people rocked up to Telstra and Vodafone and Optus with 100 points of ID ready to sign on the dotted line for whatever two-year commitment they could get in ten minutes. If they couldn't get the 16GB black model they wanted, they'd take the 8GB, or a white one — just don't let me leave the store without an iPhone!

It was foolish. It was reckless. And the telcos knew it was going to happen, and they were waiting.

The great irony in it is that all three were apparently holding back their plans to avoid being undersold by their competitors, yet Optus, the one that released its plans earliest, turns out to have generally the best value plans. Some of the Vodafone plans offer similar value to Optus, though there's less flexibility. Don't get me started on Telstra. 5MB included data a month? What?

There were practically riots in the streets in Canada (I say practically because, really, Canadians aren't the rioting kind) when its one and only iPhone provider came out with a plan offering 2GB of data for \$C115 (about \$A117). For \$A119 you get 1GB from Telstra. That is frankly absurd.

Rogers has relented and now offers a plan with 3GB of data for \$C60 (\$A61.50). Of course it relented because people knew about its plans far enough in advance to realise how

awful they were, kick up a stink, sign petitions and get media coverage that made Rogers look opportunistic and greedy. No-one knew Telstra's plans were even worse until it was too late. Maybe we could riot in the streets now, but it won't help people who, groggy at 6am and running on the pure adrenaline hit of owning an iPhone, have already signed the contracts.

We're supposed to have a competitive telecommunications industry here. We've got telcos providing iPhones — that should have led to better deals, not worse. The secrecy, the skulduggery, the sheer arrogant silence of the three telcos and Apple over the weeks leading up to the iPhone launch completely undermined what the market should have been able to provide.

In the USA, where there is only one telco selling iPhones, AT&T offers plans from as little as \$US70 (about \$A72) with unlimited data.

For what it's worth, at time of writing I'd been using the iPhone 3G for three weeks on a variety of networks and had used about 180MB of mobile data (not counting WiFi, which I generally use at home and in the office). Of course only a few days of that had included the availability of MobileMe and the App Store. At a guess I'd say the \$89 200MB per month plan wouldn't be enough for me (even with its very generous \$25 of included calls — *that's not a typo*). I'd have to go on to the \$119 1GB plan.

Anyone care to join me in a riot? ☹

Matthew JC. Powell

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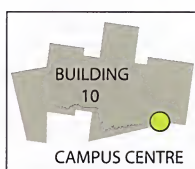
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Each month, Conexus (02 9975 0900) is giving away a set of JBL Reference 220 headphones valued at \$140 to The Australian Macworld reader who sends in what we deem to be the most interesting letter. Earphones have always been a smaller, more portable alternative to traditional headphones, and JBL Reference 200 Series earphones are certainly that. But Reference 200 Series earphones are designed to perform more like their larger counterparts. Is it possible to get realistic, full-spectrum sound from virtually weightless earphones that can easily slip into a pocket? Would we have brought it up if the answer were no?

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V" or by post to Australian Macworld Mailbox, 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. Comments posted to the forums on www.macworld.com.au are also eligible for the JBL Reference 220 prize. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the JBL Reference 220 prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

JBL Reference 220 letter of the month

Welcome to the world

About 2 months ago I decided it was time for a change in my computing world, and that I was going to try out a Mac computer. Next Byte is the main Apple reseller in Tasmania, so I bought a MacBook from them. I got home and started the computer up, only to find that it had an account already on it. Upon ringing Next Byte, I discovered they had given me a laptop that had been taken back to them because it was dodgy. Bad salesmanship, but no fault of Apple. So I went back and they promptly gave me a new one. Unfortunately, when I opened this one, it had a warped battery. A little perturbed, I went back again and showed them the problem. So they sent it back as a dead on arrival, and after a few days they got me a new MacBook. This third MacBook seemed fine for a while, but then every now and then it started using insane amounts of CPU and would lag horrendously. Once

again I went back to Next Byte (keep in mind this was nearly a month after I had purchased the first computer), and they played around with it for a bit. When they realised it was faulty, they made arrangements for me to get a fourth MacBook: the one I am currently typing on. When I first got it, I noticed it had a slightly wobbly mouse button, but I was too tired of dealing with them, so I decided to let it pass.

That was the beginning on my adventure into the world of Macs. Thankfully it has been a smoother ride since then.

Leuke Marriott
South Hobart, Tas.

It would be great if every new Mac user had an absolutely flawless experience when they made the switch. Unfortunately stories like this one seem to come up from time to time. My recommendation: join the AMW forums, where you'll get a virtually infinite source of help and advice. — M.JC.P.

Weird (lack of) Science

I am a PhD student studying biological science and a regular reader of *Australian Macworld*. I just wanted to know if there is anyone else out there who would think it would be good to hear some tips on using a Mac as a scientist either in the mag or on the web site.

There are plenty of topics that could be covered, including using Macs to find and keep track of scientific literature, how to produce a scientific paper with Word and Endnote, how to handle large documents in word processors (such as theses) and so on. There could be advice on the best way to word with other scientists using Windows and how to submit a paper so that you don't run into compatibility problems.

There are also many scientific applications (such as Endnote) that could be reviewed. I can suggest a few applications that I regularly use.

Is this something that you might consider? I'd be happy to contribute in some way.

Ben
Via AMW Forums

If there's enough interest from readers, of course we'd look at covering more specialist scientific topics. We've done a few such articles in the past (and most of what we cover is at least partly applicable to what scientists do with their Macs as well) but if there's something we should be looking more closely at, we'll look. — M.JC.P.

World traveller

If I purchase a 3G iPhone in the USA, will it be the same as one purchased in Australia (apart from the charger plug)? Will it work, and will all the functions work?

Rob Herweynen
Vie e-mail

It won't be exactly the same as one purchased in Australia, but very very close. The specs of iPhones sold here are ever so slightly different. Nonetheless, a phone purchased in the USA and legally unlocked over there will work on the Australian network. The function set available is partly dependent on the carrier you choose over here. — M.JC.P.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Mentor letter of the month 1. Instructions on how to enter form part of these conditions of entry. 2. To enter send tips or queries to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V". Entries will be judged by the editorial staff of Australian Macworld. The judges' decision in relation to any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. Chance plays no part in determining the winner(s). Each entry will be individually judged based on its degree of interest. 4. Employees, their immediate families and agencies associated with this competition are not permitted to enter. 5. The Promoter accepts no responsibility for late or misdirected entries. 6. The best entry/entries as determined by the judges will win the prize(s). 7. The Promoter is neither responsible nor liable for any change in the value of the prize occurring between the publish date and the date the prize(s) is claimed. 8. The prize(s) is not transferable and will not be exchanged for cash. 9. The winner(s) will be notified by mail. 10. All entries become the property of the Promoter. 11. The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this competition is governed by the Privacy Notice 12. The Promoter is Niche Media Pty Ltd of 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 Ph 03 9948 4900, (ABN 13 064 613 529).



Podcast feedback

A funny thing happened the other day when I was listening to my iPhone mp3 collection. I realised (after hearing the same song too many times this week and wondering if the Shuffle function was broken) that I had 22 editions or so of the AMW podcasts that I had been automatically downloading and synchronising to my iPhone and they were all unlistened to. So I played them for something different and apart from being shocked by MJCP's quaint mixture of accents I never would have expected (I've been accused of having a twang in my voice after spending only 2 1/2 years in Calgary) was very impressed with the content. I've never been involved with a MUG but I am guessing that if I were I may become engrossed in the sort of conversations that you guys do on the Podcasts. The irritating part was that I found myself trying to butt in and add my two cents worth before I realised it was recorded conversation, and I was just talking to myself (thankfully in the privacy of my car).

The oddities like MJCP sometimes pretending he is not in some way a geek, when clearly, everyone who is on the PodCast is — and being one myself I have to suggest that there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Other imaginative responses to the simple question "How are you today" show just what an interesting mix of people we have working behind the scenes.

I have to say the technical content as well as the interplay is a great combination and I am now determined to listen to the remaining 12 I haven't made it to yet and in future I will keep up to date each week.

AppleConvert
Via AMW Forums

Aw, shucks. We've got big plans for the AMW Weekend Edition podcast, so keep listening for some pretty interesting changes. — M.JC.P.

Problem screening

I recently used a brand new MacBook. I was shocked to find that when you closed the lid the keyboard left indents on the screen. This was also the case with another MacBook I used. Is it a design flaw or is it a manufacturing mishap?

Nicholas Bosch
Hazelbrook NSW

The screen of a MacBook should end up very close to the keys when the lid is closed, but not touching. If it's actually touching and leaving indents on the screen, that's a fault. Even when not touching though, you can end up with oil and gunk from the keys finding its way onto the screen, which looks unsightly. You can prevent this by covering the keyboard with a light cloth when closing the MacBook. — M.JC.P.

iPhone conundrum

I don't get it. What's the big deal about the iPhone? OK, it's well-designed, like a lot of Apple things, but is it any better than other phones? What can it do that any other smartphone can't do? Given what a small share of the computer market Apple has, why does anyone care that it's also going to have a small share of the phone market?

Theo Deisel
Adelaide, SA

It's an interesting question and one that quite a few people are asking. In truth the iPhone is missing a lot of features you'll find on other smartphones. What it does well (like web browsing) it does extremely well though. I'm sure we'll be having this discussion for some time yet. — M.JC.P.

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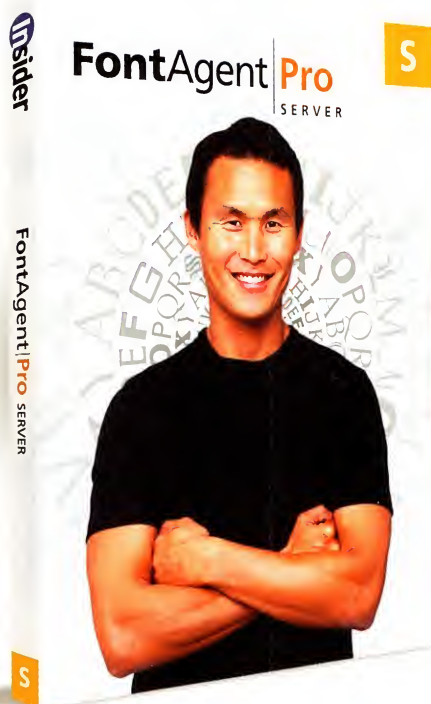
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Not a slow news month

The 07.2008 issue of *Australian Macworld* went to the printers the day Steve Jobs announced the iPhone 3G at the WWDC keynote. Almost unbelievably, it's only been a month since then.

In that time Australia officially joined the fraternity of countries that have an Apple-owned retail presence with the opening of the Apple Store Sydney on the 19th of June. The day before that opening Ron Johnson, Apple's Vice President responsible for retail, told *AMW* that "by having the Store opening before the iPhone 3G launch we get to have two big events".

The first of those two was the Store itself, which dozens of people slept in front of overnight in order to be among the first through the doors. By the time the Store actually opened, thousands of people had queued on George Street, up King and onto York Street – many of them with no intention of actually buying anything.

At least you got a free t-shirt. They popped up on eBay days later selling for upwards of \$100.

The second event was of course the iPhone 3G launch on the 11th of July. The first place you could go to buy an iPhone in Australia was the Optus "Yes" Store in George Street, Sydney, a few blocks from the Apple Store. Hundreds of people lined up around the block in the middle of a rather chilly Sydney night in order to obtain Apple's new wonder device. Luckily Optus provided scarves.

None of them have yet turned up on eBay.

Of course if you didn't want to get an iPhone from Optus you could also line up at a Telstra or Vodafone outlet. Some even lined up outside the Apple Store overnight.

But wait, there's more. The other changes in tandem with the release of the iPhone – the transition from

.Mac to MobileMe and the launch of the App Store for iPhone applications – were also of significance to Mac users this month.

At time of writing the MobileMe transition was going other than entirely smoothly, with users reporting problems synchronising contacts and other information, as well as new iPhone users finding that the push e-mail functionality didn't work effectively. Hopefully by the time you read this those teething problems will have been solved.

What won't have changed is the features that have been dropped from .Mac, such as iCards and HomePage editing using iWeb. While the discontinuation of these services had been announced at WWDC many users still reported disappointment once the transition had taken place.

And yet more. Late on the afternoon of 24 June, some astute iTunes Store users noticed something new: TV shows had been added to the Australian store, completely absent any degree of fanfare. Apple didn't even issue a press release about it until 5am the following day, and that was sent out without a header in the e-mail.

Perhaps the low-key approach was in line with the modesty of the offering: 21 programs were available at launch, from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the American ABC network, MTV, Channel Nine and Disney.

Also virtually unheralded was a price reduction in the solid-state disk option in configuring the MacBook Air. That option now costs \$769, quite a reduction on the \$1409 premium it attracted at launch in January.

I think that's everything. One very busy month in the life of Apple and the Mac. — *Matthew JC. Powell*

[APPLE NEWS]

The App Store cometh

It's the not-so-secret weapon that turns the 3G iPhone into a utility powerhouse. It's the App Store, and Apple unveiled it on the night the iPhone went on sale. Which was great, if you happened to have an iPhone by then, which means that those who queued up in Sydney's chilly climes outside the Optus store could jump right in straight away. That also applied to those who had early access to the iPhone. I fit into that category, and spent some time perusing the App Store at length. Canny AMW forumites (aren't they all canny? Well, maybe not all the time) also spotted at around the same time that the iTunes 7.7 (which came through as an update yesterday) gave access to the App Store, albeit only for browsing purposes at that stage.

I've used a lot of smartphones over the years, and tried to install applications to many of them. Typically, this process can be described as insanely painful, involving downloading an application on a computer, then syncing the phone, then installing the application, then hoping like crazy that it's not a virus or doesn't just crash the phone and wipe the SIM.

By comparison, the App Store is almost stupidly simple. Hit the App Store button, and you're taken to a "Featured" page, similar to that you could already get via iTunes on an iPod Touch. The bottom menu allows you to quickly flick between Categories, the Top 25 applications, search for Apps and check that you're

running the most current version of each of these applications. It's an effortless procedure, and everything is clearly laid out — almost.

There are, predictably, a few launch quirks. At first, I'd presumed that there were only 15 games on offer (and at the time of writing, Games make up about 75 per cent of the Top 25 applications, so there's definitely interest), because the Games category lists that many. In fact, there are many, many more games — including some free ones — but the vast majority are located in the "Entertainment" category. Clearer guidelines might be in order there.

It's also tough not to be somewhat overwhelmed by the sheer number of applications on offer. Apple's claiming over 500 applications available at launch, which is far more than I'd ever thought of running on any other smartphone I've ever come across. Checking via the iPhone, there's a total of 725 applications listed via category, although that's somewhat deceptive — as an example, all 15 of the "Games" turn up again in "Entertainment" as mentioned above.

Up and running. Installing an application is remarkably simple, either from the Phone (and later, the Touch) itself, or via iTunes. As with the iTunes Store, you make your selection by clicking on the price, at which point it swishes away to become an "install" icon. You tap on that icon, and it'll begin downloading the application immediately. This works on either WiFi or 3G (and presumably 2G), although WiFi is by far going to be your quickest bet in almost any situation, and you also won't run foul of the 3G limitation of 10MB per application.

The application sets itself the next available icon spot on the Phone, and a small download bar across it lets you know how quickly it's progressing. Once it's installed, you're by default dropped back out of the App Store, but you can click on your application of choice and start using it immediately.

From iTunes, it's not much different, although you will need to sync with the iPhone to actually get the application running. Synchronising also backs up applications, although this can mean if you've downloaded an application from iTunes and subsequently deleted it from the iPhone, it'll reappear by default the next time you synchronise.

In terms of pricing, Apple seems to have largely left that up to the application vendors. There's a swag of free Apps (we'll let you do the maths there) along with appli-



cations that start at \$1.19 (including some games and a raft of public domain e-books). The typical top-end price is \$12.99, mostly for games, although at least one application, TravelTracker, will set you back a meaty \$36.99.

One factor that I found interesting was that it's a lot easier to just browse the App Store from within iTunes than it is on a 3G iPhone. There's a certain amount of inevitability about that, simply due to screen real estate issues, but there's a couple of key areas that Apple really should address to make things simpler for iPhone/iPod Touch users. There's no way to quickly browse for free applications (there is on iTunes), although you can view the top 25 free applications at any given time. Search functionality is rather rudimentary; while you could search for "Free" (and it will return free applications), it'll also return any application with that in the title.

Must-have. Speaking of Free applications, one of the really nice aspects of the App Store is the breadth of free software on offer. This ranges from the very silly (Moo, PhoneSaber) to the more serious, such as VoiceNote, EasyNote, AIM and Facebook, as well as the very useful Remote, which lets you remotely control iTunes on a Mac, or control an Apple TV outright. A quick Remote

tip, by the way. When I first installed it, there was no way it would work for me – I kept getting told that "an unknown error occurred. Please check your library and try again." My gut feel was that this was because my iTunes Library files were on the MacBook I was trying to control, but the music files resided on my NAS, and for whatever reason, Remote didn't like that.

I discovered the fix, however, if it strikes anyone else. First of all, try quitting out of Remote. Start playback on your Mac, then connect Remote up again. It should spot that something's playing. Pause that, and from then on, you should have full remote control back again.

Getting back to the App store, there's also a certain quantity of free software on offer that's essentially adware – either front-ends for business applications such as Salesforce.com, or just advertising, such as the Carling-sponsored iPrint. Although in the case of iPrint, it does at least offer a virtual beer for free; there's also iBeer, but that will cost you \$3.99.

At the time of writing, Apple has announced that the 2.0 software will cost \$12.99 for iPod Touch owners. That's still a kick in the teeth, but it's at least a lighter bit of dentistry than the previous upgrade. — Alex Kidman

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www.macworld.com.au/events
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MUG event listing for August

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www.saauc.org.au

Sat 2

AUSOM Incorporated [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeetings

Mon 4

AMUG Sydney [NSW]
homepage.mac.com/sydamug
Gold Coast Macintosh User Group [QLD]
www.goldcoastmacusers.org.au

Tue 5

North Queensland Macintosh Users Group [QLD]
www.nqmug.org
MacTalk — Newcastle & The Hunter Macintosh User Group
www.mactalkhunter.org.au
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www.wamug.org.au/meetings

Wed 6

South Australian Apple Users' Club [SA]
www.saauc.org.au
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www.clubmac.org.au
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www.taamug.org.au

Thu 7

TasMac [TAS]
groups.yahoo.com/group/tasmug
Hervey Bay Mac Users Group [QLD]

Sat 9

AMUG Sydney [NSW]
homepage.mac.com/sydamug
North Queensland Macintosh Users Group [QLD]
www.nqmug.org
ACT Apple Users Group [ACT]
www.actapple.org.au

Sun 10

Gold Coast Apple Users Group [QLD]
go.in.to/gcusers

Mon 11

Macintosh Users Group Sunshine Coast [QLD]
www.mugsunco.org.au

Tue 12

ACT Apple Users Group [ACT]
www.actapple.org.au
Macintosh Multimedia Group [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeetings
www.imug.com.au/meetings.php

Wed 13

Bellarine Mac User Group [VIC]
www.bellarinemac.org.au
Club Mac [NSW]
www.clubmac.org.au
AUSOM Retirees & Others [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeetings
Coffs Harbour Mac User Group [NSW]
groups.yahoo.com/group/coffs_mac_users

Thu 14

Melbourne Cocoaheads [VIC]
www.melbournecocoaheads.com

Sat 17

Apple-Q [QLD]
www.apple-q.org.au

Sun 18

Byron Shire Macintosh Users [NSW]
www.ozshop.net/bsmug

Tue 20

Bendigo Education Apple Users Team [VIC]
www.beaut.org.au

Sun 24

Apple-Q [QLD]
www.apple-q.org.au

Mon 25

Alice Springs Apple User Group [NT]
www.bizcom.com.au

Tue 26:

Mug (Internet Macintosh User Group) [NSW]
www.imug.com.au

Thu 28

Central Victorian Macintosh Users [VIC]
www.cvmu.net

Sat 30

Geraldton Macintosh User Group [WA]
www.gmug.org.au

- List compiled by Nicholas Pyers

[MUSIC]

Hotlinks

moocowmusic.com/Band/
Band

The iPhone as music machine

With the iPhone now a local reality, it's worth thinking about the musical applications it can be put to. The WWDC announcement covered one significant application available from the App Store at launch: Band from Moo Cow Music. It's a feature-packed application that allows you to record drums, bass, guitars and keyboards onto the one song. The 12 Bar Blues option gives you the option of playing a guitar solo with full backing band and seems to be one of the more immediately fun aspects of Band. There's also more esoteric instruments like DJ scratching and one called "Audience" which allows you to record applause by pressing in sections of a large crowd.

Band is no one-finger data entry slouch either – up to five-fingered chords can be played and the lack of physical feedback is partly compensated for by the animation of the instruments being played. Press a string and it plucks.

Band also has a number of features you'd normally only find on a more full-featured application: overdubbing, configurable metronome and undo options are three that caught my eye. There's even a decent mixing capability to polish your final product. I can already see the iPhone song sharing that'll be occurring as people try to outdo each other – it's extreme air guitar.

Moo Cow Music has created another great application also available from the App Store. Pianist is a full 88-key piano. This would be my first purchase as a keyboard player – I just love the idea of being able to explore chords or create melody lines simply and on a "proper" keyboard. Like Band it has multi-finger chords, a configurable metronome and the ability to overdub.

I'm making one fairly safe prediction for the coming few months: lots more music applications will be appearing and they'll have increasing feature sets. I'd even go so far as to predict a version of GarageBand for iPhone at some stage – a 16GB iPhone has plenty of storage for a good set of Apple Loops and it'd make a superb scratch pad for music on the go. The day a good quality audio input for iPhone is available, the creative options will expand further. A vocoder for iPhone anyone?

For obsessive songwriters or just iPhone users wanting to do something more engaging than games, things are looking up. — David Holloway

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[PEOPLE]

A rare word from Ive

While Jonathan Ive, Apple's senior vice president of industrial design, may be well known for his creative prowess, he's also notable for his retiring nature: unlike a lot of Apple's other executives, he doesn't give many interviews or do public appearances. But that reticence belies the importance of his role at Apple; aside from Steve Jobs himself, there is arguably no one more significant at the company. Ive recently garnered two "Black Pencil" awards, handed out by British charity Design & Art Direction—aka D&AD (not to be confused with AD&D, or Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, which gives the somewhat less prestigious "Best Bugbear" award). The Black Pencils are extremely prized in the industry, given that they are not

automatically awarded every year; if no design in a given year meets the organisation's standard, D&AD will opt not to hand out any awards at all, as happened in 2003. In the wake of receiving the awards, Ive spoke to England's *The Independent*:

"My goal is simply to try to make products that really are meaningful to people. Ultimately, there is something motivating and inspiring in seeing someone using an Apple product and enjoying an Apple product."

— Dan Moren



[MOBILITY]



Air New Zealand installs iPod docking stations

The love affair between iPods and airplanes is nothing new—heck, iPods have even traveled to space. According to a report on England's *Times Online* web site, Air New Zealand is now preparing to expand this relationship even more with the inclusion of Panasonic's X Series in-flight entertainment system in 13 Airbus A320s and five Boeing 767s. Once the aircraft are outfitted with this high-end gadgetry, passengers who own iPods (which, as we know, is pretty much everyone in the world) and even other portable media players will be able to hook them up to the system and listen to their music, watch videos on seat-back screens, and control the iPods through the custom interface.

— Aayush Arya

[APPLE]

Apple dinged on the environment

Despite Apple's big push last year on environmental issues, it seems that the green community still isn't impressed. While Greenpeace marginally raised Apple's ranking in its latest scorecard, nonprofit Climate Counts has a few choice words to say about Cupertino's stance on the environment. In its most recent scorecard, the organisation ranks Apple at the bottom of the list for electronics companies, with a score of 11 out of a possible 100. Apple is deemed "a choice to avoid for the climate-conscious consumer" (we say bravo for the catchy, alliterative verdict). Even second-to-last Nokia scored 37, and IBM led the pack with 77. As with Greenpeace, a lot of Climate Counts' criticisms concern Apple's lack

of transparency on environmental issues, something the company has been improving upon slowly. A year

after Steve Jobs posted his "A Greener Apple" memo, in which he promised that Apple would provide updates of its efforts and accomplishments "at least annually," all is quiet from corporate HQ. I think it's about time for the company to deliver on at least *that* promise.

— Dan Moren



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AudioCodex. Real-time effects media player that tightly integrates your media.

Audiodia. A real-time sound processing application.

AudioMixer. Play and mix multiple audio tracks.

Canto Pod. Offers users of iPods the ability to download song lyrics for later viewing.

ClickRepair. Declick and decrackle your audio.

CrossAmp. Cross-platform audio player.

Desktoplyrics. Display the lyrics of the song currently playing in iTunes right on your desktop.

Disco XT. DJ mixing and music playback software.

Djay. Turns your Mac into a full blown DJ setup using all your songs from iTunes.

EasyWMA. Convert wma, wmv/flv audio, asf and ogg vorbis files to aiff, mp3, m4a or wav.

Express Dictate. Works like a dictaphone. Send dictation to your typist by e-mail, internet or over the network.

Fission. Copy, paste and trim audio, as well as split files, all with no quality loss!

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MusicPort. Stream iTunes music over the internet between Macs.

NaioCast. A free HTTP streaming server that allows live transmission of audio files.

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The applications supplied on this CD are supplied as is and we make no representations regarding the applications or any information related thereto. Any questions, complaints or claims regarding the applications must be directed to the appropriate software vendor.

Various different license types apply. Some titles require further payment direct to the application publisher to enable the full feature sets and functions. — Nicholas Pyers

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Openers, closers & lower thirds

Capturing and editing video footage is only half the job when creating a great movie. The rest of the post-production — like adding effects and titles — is often where the true genius in movie making lies, and it's often the hardest to get right.

Hotlinks

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7p1v6NWnhw

25 of the best title sequences

cooltext.com/Fonts-Movies+and+TV

Movie and TV fonts

How often have you seen a movie that was really great, but you can't remember what it was called and who it was produced by, because the titles were so bad? I've even seen movies that had me asleep before the movie began, thanks to a long and boring title sequence.

Adding titles to your own movies is easy, and, in the final analysis, adds value to the viewing experience. Title sequences can give your viewers lots of information about what they're about to see, or what they've just seen. Information like the name of your movie, who made and produced it and the actors' names gives your audience the chance to better appreciate the effort that's gone into the production.

You can also use titles to give your audience clues about other important details, like where and when the story took place. And if required, sub-titles can be used to help your audience understand the movie if it's been filmed in a different language.

In broad terms, title sequences can be broken into opening or closing credits. Opening credits, as the name suggests, should be shown at the beginning of your movie and list the most important cast members. Closing credits come at the end of the movie, and should include a list of all the cast and crew involved in making the movie.

Before jumping into the deep end, it's worth thinking about some of your favourite movies and trying to recall the titles they used. One example that always sticks in my mind is Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* title sequence by Saul Bass — the combination of music and jolted title makes for a chilling opening, well before there's any sign of a shower curtain. Another more recent favourite of mine is the title sequence for the Pixar movie *Monsters Inc.*

According to Big Film Design, a New York-based consultancy that specialises in title production, "A title sequence is more than just a list of credits. It can be a mini-movie which sets up the film that it's a part of. It can establish mood, period and style. A title sequence can take care of back story. It can soothe the audience or get them agitated. Title sequences are an art form of their own".

Big Film Design would know, it's been involved in producing title sequences for many big-budget Oscar-winning movies like *No Country For Old Men* and *Michael Clayton*, and also TV series like *Sesame Street*, *30 Rock* and *Six Degrees*.

Another expert in Title Sequences, Deborah Allison says that great title sequences forge a "contract with the audience at the outset, instructing them of the parameters within which the film operates, alerting them to the tonalities of the film to come, and encouraging them to approach that experience in a frame of mind where they will be receptive to the pleasures it has to offer".



How do you do it? We all know that creating title sequences like those found on the silver screen isn't something that iMovie '08 can do, but with a little bit of tweaking, and some patience, adding proper title sequences can even make your home movies look better.

There are two different styles of titles: Overlays (where the words appear over the moving image); and full-screen (where the titles appear against a black background). Full screen titles are generally found at the beginning and the end of a movie, while overlays are more common in the middle. That's not to say however, that you can't throw a full-screen title in the middle of your movie — and in fact, some do, as a way of breaking up a movie into several parts.

Often home movies have many titles in them that are used to tell the audience where you are, the date the movie was taken, and who was in it. My latest home movie for example, consisted of movies from the first twelve months of my son's life, and at the start of the footage for each month I added a short title sequence that explained to the audience what and who they were about to see.

If you've had experience putting together PowerPoint or Keynote presentations some of the techniques are relevant when creating movie titles too. The general "less is more" rule applies well for instance. Titles should be kept as brief as possible, making it easy for the audience to read and absorb. As in all written material, spelling mistakes should be quickly eliminated.

Also, white text on a black background is easiest for the brain to process. In movies, this can be substituted for light characters on a dark background, but in some instances dark characters on a light background can also be effective.

Choosing a font is also important when designing your titles. If the font you choose is too thin interlaced displays, like TVs, can cause lines to flicker — causing strain on your viewers' eyes. That's why it's generally recommended that thicker fonts are used in title sequences. In the same vein, the size of the font should be appropriate to view from a distance. The bigger the

title, the easier it will be to read. While both of these tips sound like common sense, you'd be amazed to discover how many people make these fundamental errors.

Finally, from a technical perspective, if the movie you've made will be watched on a TV (as opposed to a flat-screen or computer display) you'll need to consider overscan. Overscan is when a video image is cut off at the edges of the screen. If your title is on the edge it might well be cut off when viewed on a TV set. Most video editing programs allow you to see these borders, and design your titles accordingly.

Another good habit to get into before you begin designing your titles is to create a list of the text you want to add to your movie in a text document. That way, you can lay out the sequence of titles, check for spelling errors, and get a feel for the number of titles you'll need.

Creating titles in iMovie '08. Adding titles in iMovie '08 is easy. To access the titles menu either go to Window > Titles, or click the Titles button in the iMovie toolbar. Bringing up the Titles window gives you a list of different titles styles. You can choose from any of the styles, but my favourites are Centered or Lower Third for the title sequence. It's important to note however, that you don't need to choose just one sequence per movie – you can drag in multiple sequences anywhere in your movie.

Once you've selected the title sequence you prefer, click and drag the sequence to the position in the time line where you want the titles to appear. If you're building your opening sequence, click and drag the title and drop it in front of the first clip. Adding the title sequence to the front of a clip tells iMovie that you want to create the clip over a black background, rather than overlaying the title on the movie.

If, however, you want to overlay your titles on an existing clip, simply drag the title sequence to the position of the clip where you want the title sequence to begin. You'll notice as you drag a title sequence over a clip

iMovie highlights either the first third of the clip (to indicate that the title will overlay only a third of the clip), the whole clip, or the last third of the clip. This feature makes it easy to build your title sequence quickly.

Once you've dropped your clip into the timeline you'll need to start adding text to the title sequence. You'll notice once you've placed your clip that iMovie shows you text boxes within the title sequence. This is where you place your cursor and start typing. If you added a simple Centered sequence all you need to add are a title, and a subtitle if you've got one. An example for the title might be *My Family Holiday* and the subtitle *May 2008*.

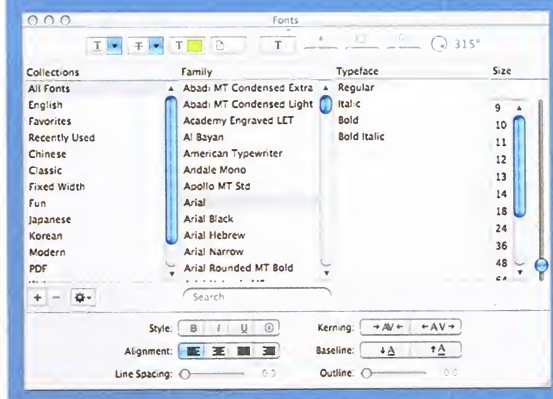
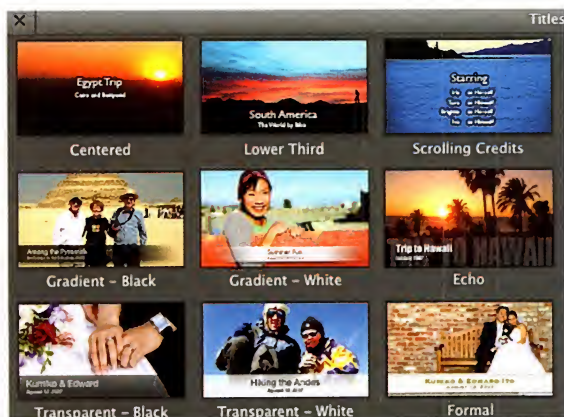
If your title sequences are over black you can always create multiple different title sequences and link them together using transitions. For instance, you might start to use the Centered theme, but want to add a number of centered titles. To do this, drag in the Centered theme as many times as you need, and once in the timeline add the text to each frame. You can then add transi-

Choosing the right font

Choosing the right font for your title sequence can have an effect on how your audience views your movie. Some fonts, for example, aren't suited for use on screen — they are too difficult for the brain to interpret quickly. Instead, stick to fonts that are easy to read and legible.

The same rules that apply to selecting a serif or sans serif font for your web site or presentation can be applied when adding titles to your movie. Typically serif fonts (like Helvetica) are easiest to read but often look formal and serious. Sans serif fonts (like Times) are often more informal and can be easier to read in captions.

If you want to have a bit of fun with the fonts in your titles sequences try downloading some of the samples at CoolText (see "Hotlinks").



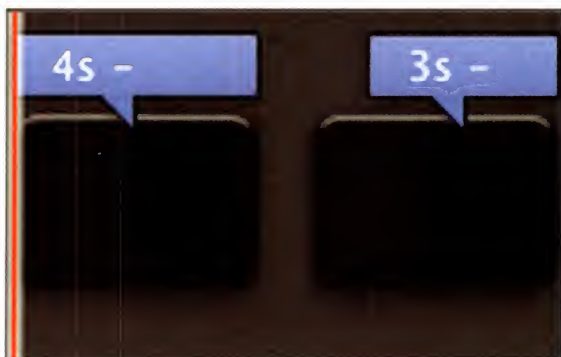


tions between the frames to add some motion to the opening sequence.

Each pre-built title sequence that Apple includes comes with a default font. In my experience these generally look good, however you may want to customise the font that you use in your movie. To customise the font your title uses click the Show Fonts box in the top of the viewer window to bring up the standard Mac OS X font dialogue, with a few differences.

As well as standard Collection, Family, Typeface and Size options, the font dialogue also gives you some iMovie-only options. These give you more control, and are especially important when designing titles. For example, the Outline option means you can use coloured titles, and still make them easier to read by adding an outline. Also, if you want to change the colour of the text in your title remember to highlight the text first and then click on the Text Colour button at the top of the Fonts dialogue.

After you've added your title sequence to your timeline you'll notice iMovie adds a cartoon-style bubble above your clip to indicate the presence of a title sequence. To change the time the title sequence runs, simply click and drag either end – the time (indicated in the middle of the title bubble) will change as you drag. You can also click and drag the entire sequence to move it anywhere else in your timeline.



To finish off your masterpiece you can add another title sequence at the end. An appropriate theme for the end of your movie might be Scrolling Credits. As the name suggests, this theme will let you scroll your credits from the bottom of the screen to the top.

You can add as much text as you want to this theme, and can format it any way you prefer. By default, this theme is set to keep the text centred, but it's easy to left- or right-align the text by deleting the tabs in front of the text (to get the text centred again place your cursor to the left of the text and press the tab key).

You can control the speed of your scrolling credits by clicking and dragging the bubble above the clip. If you only want to scroll the credits over a black screen you can extend the black frame by clicking on the small clock icon that appears if you mouse over the black frame, and changing the length of time the black frame is on screen.

Once you've added your title you'll need to preview it. Do this by playing the movie as you normally would, or by pressing the spacebar. It's also important to remember that you can't change the style of the sequence once you've added it to your timeline – if you later decide you prefer a different style you'll need to delete the existing sequence and drag in a new one. Deleting the sequence is as easy as selecting the title sequence and pressing the Delete key.

LiveType 2. While iMovie '08 lets you create great-looking title sequences easily, the flipside is that there's not a huge amount of flexibility. If you need more flexibility, and more options when building your title sequence you may need to consider upgrading your movie editing program to either Final Cut Express, or Final Cut Pro (now part of Final Cut Studio). Both Final Cut Express and Studio include a standalone title program called LiveType 2.

LiveType 2 lets you create professional and sophisticated title sequences – the sort of stuff you might see in movies or on TV. In a traditional workflow, creating title sequences is very complex, but LiveType 2 lets novices create stunning titles using Alpha channel technology.

Because LiveType 2 is tightly integrated into both Final Cut Express and Final Cut Studio, learning the technology means you can easily move between the two applications. You can also use LiveType 2 in DVD Studio Pro (now part of Final Cut Studio).

Once you've created your LiveType sequence you import it to your project and add it to your movie timeline. You can still edit the LiveType sequence even if you've added it to your timeline as Final Cut Pro and Express actually maintain a link to the original LiveType sequence.



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Insights into the Australian Mac community

No lobe required

One-time lead developer at Stairways Software, Matthew Drayton, liked the company's flagship app for the Mac so much that he led an employee buy-out in February last year and formed his own independent software development outfit to take the app even higher.

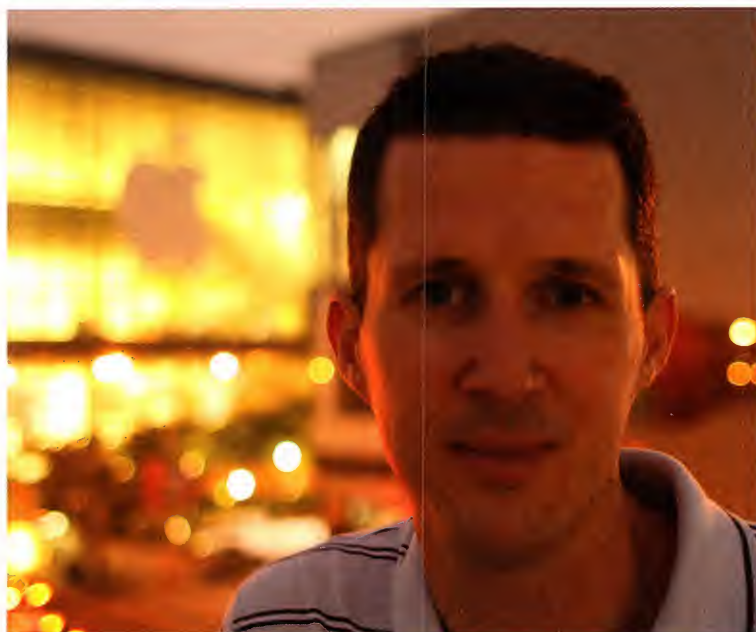
This year his new Western Australia-based company, Nolobe, has already announced updates to the program, known as Interarchy, while honouring existing licenses of the award-winning file transfer and web maintenance client for the Mac.

Twenty-nine-year-old Drayton led the development of Interarchy for around six years at Perth-based Stairways, which launched the app in 1993 as Anarchie 1.0. "I went to work for Peter N Lewis at Stairways Software at the start of 2001. I had just finished my computer science degree and desperately wanted to write Mac software. Peter gave me that opportunity," he said.

According to Pokolbin, NSW-raised Drayton, Interarchy's target customer is anyone who needs to transport files around the internet; web developers, system administrators, power users and the like.

"Our mission is to write great Mac software that is a pleasure to use," he said. "We are looking to expand into the image editing market with a new program called Iris. Iris has been created for previously overlooked Mac owners who simply wanted an accessible and easy to use image editing application that provides professional results."

Iris 1.0 should be available by the time you read this. Nolobe has also



just released a major revision to Interarchy — version 9.01. But Drayton says the most important factor is the customers, without whom Nolobe couldn't exist.

So what's with the name? "I wish I had a good story about what Nolobe means but I don't. It is just a short punchy name like Kodak or Pixar; it doesn't mean anything," Drayton said.

He wanted something short and punchy, and his wife came up with the name.

"There has been a fair bit of conjecture from our users as to what Nolobe means. I think my favourite theory was that our software is so easy to use you don't have to use your brain. Hence, 'no lobe'."

At the moment, Nolobe is just Drayton and his wife. His brother worked with them for a while but has moved on. Drayton's sister is also a business owner. Her Mint Marketing & Design does a lot of design work for Nolobe.

"My passion is programming. It has been ever since my dad introduced

me to BASIC on the Apple IIc. It is what I enjoy most," said Drayton. "I also like being in control. It is my company; I get to steer it in the direction I want. I guess I have my dad to thank for that too."

That said, Drayton is currently looking to expand and is aiming to hire one or two staff to help with maintenance and development of the Interarchy and Iris applications by the end of this year.

Opportunities in Australia and globally exist and are growing, especially with the popularity and convenience of online sales. Although the Australian market for Nolobe product is currently rather small — accounting for about three per cent of Nolobe's total sales — other English-speaking markets add to it to form the greatest portion of its customer base, followed by French-speaking, German-speaking and Japanese-speaking markets.

"We sell online. Anyone with a Mac and an internet connection can buy our software," Drayton said. "The future is bright. Apple keeps selling

Hotlinks

www.nolobe.com

Nolobe web site

www.stairways.com

Stairways Software web site

more and more Macs. Our potential customer base keeps going up. I don't think there has ever been a better time to be a Mac developer."

For Drayton, the advantage of Apple product is in the attention to detail. "You can't get away with anything on being pixel-perfect and I think this reflects positively on user experience," he explained.

Conversely, the few times he has sat down and worked on a PC have mostly left him frustrated and annoyed — longing for the pleasures of the iPod and the Mac. There's "nothing major" he doesn't like about Mac product and, arguably, some of the things he doesn't like are relatively new and a function of the increasing trend to 'lockdown' in much modern information technology, particularly if targeted to consumers.

"[However] from a user perspective, I don't like how I no longer have full control of my Mac," explained Drayton.

"Some things I understand — like the removal of user-customisable themes — but others I don't. There is no good reason why I shouldn't be able to customise the behaviour of ⌘-Tab. Nor should I not be able to delete the Movies folder. It is my Home folder — I should be able to do what I want to it."

What's more, as a developer, Drayton says he can be frustrated by the successful promotion of technologies by Apple that really don't matter to the majority of users.

"Take 64-bit for example. It is only important to a small segment of the Mac user base but, thanks to Apple's marketing department, a lot of people are asking for it without really knowing why. I'd much rather devote development resources to something more useful," he said.

Meanwhile, Nolobe is looking at creating a boxed version of Iris for sale in Apple stores following an approach by Apple to do so — a prospect Drayton finds thrilling albeit somewhat foreign. The developer is also starting to branch out into advertising but up to

this point has pretty much survived by word-of-mouth and press coverage.

"Although Interarchy has been around for 15 years it has been exclusively sold electronically," he said.

Also, Interarchy 9 introduces a new file transfer protocol based on SSH and Perl that will allow users to do some "very powerful and unique things" in the future. "I am very excited about it," Drayton said.

Drayton is also watching the latest iPhone evolutions and revolutions with interest, like many Mac users. "The iPhone SDK is very interesting but I fear some of the heavy-handed restrictions will stifle innovation. I'd really like to do a mobile version of Interarchy so people can administer their web site on the run but the SDK as it currently stands is too limiting," he said.

He also worries about Apple being the exclusive provider of applications via the App Store, because, he says, there's no guarantee Apple will actually publish a developer's application.

"We will be taking a wait and see approach with iPhone apps. I think it would be foolish to commit heavily to developing an iPhone app when there are so many unanswered questions," Drayton said.

The biggest challenge, Drayton says, is finding time to do everything. On top, of course, of making enough money to survive. "Very few indie Mac programs make enough money for their developers to work on them exclusively. Often it is a labour of love — they will have a regular job to pay the bills and come home each night and work on their program."

Recently, Drayton hasn't had much spare time to do other things he enjoys — such as basketball and making models. He has a large remote control model plane he is looking forward to finishing and he also likes to garden — which provides much amusement for his family.

"My wife would say I am never not at Nolobe. But I'm lucky — I love computer programming and Macs and this is what I do for a living." ☞

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RETURN ^{OF} THE CLONES!

You can run Mac OS X on an Intel PC — but should you?



For a few years in the mid-'90s, there were Mac clones, computers that ran the Mac operating system but weren't made by Apple. Shortly after Steve Jobs's return, Apple shut down official Mac cloning for good.

But today's Macs are really Intel-based PCs. And anyone with a little bit of know-how can assemble a PC out of parts similar to those that Apple uses to build Macs. Throw in the work of a group called the OSx86 Project, which has altered OS X to run on PC hardware, and Mac clones are once again a reality.

Are they legal? Probably not, because the license that comes with Mac OS X specifies that it be installed only on Apple-labelled hardware. However, Apple hasn't gone on the offensive to prevent hobbyists from installing OS X on their homebuilt PCs. And a couple of months ago, a company named Psystar was selling an Intel PC with a preinstalled version of Mac OS X. (It's entirely possible, though, that by the time you read this Psystar will have received an unpleasant letter from Apple's lawyers.)

Although most Mac users won't want to cross over to the dark side and run Mac OS X on non-Apple hardware, we here at Macworld are a curious lot. Which is why we set out on a journey to discover whether a Mac really is more than the sum of its parts, by building a Mac clone, buying a Psystar Open Computer, and testing them both in the lab.

Hotlinks

www.psystar.com

Potentially illegal cloner

It's Alive! There's a gap in Apple's desktop lineup. The Mac Pro is overkill, and the Mac mini isn't expandable. While the iMac has become a strong option for many, a lot of Mac users would prefer having a system with much more room for expansion.

I'm one of those people. So that's what I decided to build. I call my creation the Frankenmac.

Picking out parts. To create my dream Mac system, I set myself a budget of \$US1000 (about \$A1050 – not including a keyboard, monitor, and mouse), and started shopping for computer parts.

When you build your own PC, you must decide exactly what goes into it. You must choose the motherboard, processor, cooling system, video card, hard drives, CD/DVD burner, memory, case, and more. And if you're building a Mac-compatible PC, you have to limit yourself to hardware that's compatible with Mac OS X. I spent a lot of time searching on the web to find out what would work and what wouldn't. As you can see in the table "Frankenmac parts," the total parts cost was just over \$US980 (and the same parts purchased in Australia would cost \$A1451.26, not including shipping – of course if you shop around you may be able to beat that price).

When I set out to configure my machine, I wanted to make it reasonably fast, with the best video card I could fit into my budget, and lots of room for expansion. (I plan on using it for cross-platform testing and for running key Windows productivity software such as Half-Life 2, Crysis, and Microsoft Flight Simulator.)

Building it. After all of the parts arrived at my home, it took me a few hours to build the machine. If you've never built your own computer before, it's an interesting experience – there's something quite satisfying

about putting it all together, powering it up, and hearing that first "beep" that lets you know you haven't just turned your collection of parts into a collection of junk. Of course, if you don't hear the beep, you'll have an entirely different reaction, one that borders on panic. Thankfully, I heard the beep.

Next, I installed Vista on the PC, just to make sure everything functioned. From there, I spent several hours getting OS X to work right; while the process is straightforward, there are a lot of steps involved and a number of BIOS settings to tweak. To install both Windows and OS X on one drive, I had to jump through even more hoops. Finally, after many hours of reading, assembling, disassembling, screaming, installing, uninstalling, re-installing, cursing, pestering friends, and generally not having much fun, I was done: my machine was up and running, and capable of booting into either Windows Vista or Mac OS X 10.5.2.

Getting started. From the outside, my machine doesn't look anything like a Mac. The case from Antec is a glossy black, with a door that hides the externally-accessible drive bays, along with two USB ports, one external SATA port, and audio jacks on a shiny metallic strip on the front. And when it starts up, the BIOS-loading screen and black-and-white text-based boot loader (which lets you choose between Vista and OS X) is a dead giveaway that this is not your normal Mac.

However, if I were to hide the case and set you down in front of the monitor when the system was already running, you'd be convinced you were using a "real" Mac. It ran all the OS X programs I tried without problems.

On the hardware front, everything also seems to work fine. The onboard Ethernet, audio, USB, external SATA, and FireWire ports all function. My Wacom tablet worked without a hitch.

After a week or so with the Frankenmac, it was time for me to transfer it from my own personal mad-scientist lab to Macworld Lab, where it could be speed-tested against real Macs and the Open Computer clone from Psystar. The results were pretty good – see the sidebar "It came from the lab!" for all the details.

I've created a monster! Given the positive result of my tinkering, you may be tempted to build your own Mac clone. Before making such a decision, however, you need to consider the pitfalls of building or buying your own Mac clone – and there are many.

Parts is parts. Building a computer from parts isn't a simple thing to do – to put everything together, you'll need patience and the ability to follow poorly-translated instructions. To get the best pricing on the various parts, you have to be willing to shop around. I wound up buying parts from four suppliers, and by doing so, I saved

Frankenmac parts

Part	Description	Cost
Motherboard	Asus P5K-E	\$152.99 [A\$223.94]
CPU	Intel Core 2 Quad Q6600 2.4GHz	\$219.99 [A\$293.37]
CPU Heat Sink	Zalman CNPS7700-Cu	\$48.00 [A\$69.00]
RAM	4GB DDR-2 800MHz PC6400	\$94.99 [A\$88.00]
Video card	MSI Nx8800gt 512MB OC	\$189.99 [A\$368.95]
Case	Antec Sonata III 500	\$119.90 [A\$239.00]
Optical drive	LGH1-DT-ST GSA-H62N	\$40.00 [A\$59.00]
Hard drive	Seagate 500GB SATA 2	\$93.00 [A\$110.00]
Other	Shipping Charges	\$23.45 [A\$unknown]
Total		\$981.41 [A\$1451.26]

It came from the lab!

While Rob was assembling his home-built Frankenmac, we were ordering a Psystar Open Computer for testing in the Macworld Lab. The system we bought features a 2.2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor, 2GB of 667MHz RAM, and a 250GB hard drive with Mac OS X preinstalled. Though Psystar's base model includes Intel's integrated graphics, we splurged and purchased an Nvidia GeForce 8600GT for \$US110. We also purchased a FireWire add-on card. Total cost for the system we ordered was \$US715 (Psystar quotes an additional \$US ^ ^ ^ for shipping to Australia).

It was obvious right away that product packaging is one area where Psystar is not following Apple's lead. When the box arrived, we found it stuffed with white foam packing peanuts, which made the unpacking process a big mess.

When we tried to start up the computer, it made a noise like we'd turned on a garbage disposal. It turns out that one of the internal power cables was getting caught in the fan. After we rerouted the cable, the crunching sound disappeared, but the fan was still loud.

We also couldn't get Time Machine to run properly, though Psystar released a fix. (Of course, if Psystar were to disappear, future fixes would also vanish — scary.) The Open Computer also can't handle FireWire Target Disk Mode, Safe Boot, zapping of PRAM, or startup drive selection via the option key. **Open Computer.** Overall, the Open Computer's performance ranked somewhere between a 2GHz Mac mini and a 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo iMac. Speedmark 5 results show the Open Computer to be quite a bit faster than the high-end Mac mini, but slower than the low-end iMac. However, the upgraded graphics card we bought enabled the Open Computer to blow away the iMac in our tests of 3D game performance.

The Frankenmac. Rob Griffiths's Frankenmac system performs like a higher-end iMac, with a few test results rivaling Apple's fastest Mac Pros. The Frankenmac earned a Speedmark 5 score of 222, slightly slower than that of the 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo iMac.

One area in which the Frankenmac failed to live up to expectations was in our series of hard-drive tests. Rob configured the Frankenmac so that three operating systems were running on separate partitions on the machine's 500GB drive, which probably slowed things down a bit. In more processor-based tasks, such as MPEG compression and 3D rendering, the Frankenmac's four processing cores helped it beat all our other reference systems handily.

Macworld Lab test

Speedmark 5 test results

Psystar Open Computer Core 2 Duo/2.2GHz	213
FrankenMac Intel Core 2 Quad/2.4 GHz	222
Mac mini Core 2 Duo/2GHz	167
20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz (April 2008)	230

Cinema 4D XL 10.5 test results

Psystar Open Computer Core 2 Duo/2.2GHz	60
FrankenMac Intel Core 2 Quad/2.4 GHz	32
Mac mini Core 2 Duo/2GHz	67
20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz (April 2008)	54

For Speedmark scores, longer is better. For Cinema 4D XL scores, shorter is better, and results are in seconds. Reference systems are in italics. Speedmark 5 scores are relative to those of a 1.5GHz Core Solo Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.5.2 with 2GB of RAM.—macworld lab testing by Brian Chen, James Galbraith, and Jerry Jung.

couple of hundred bucks. But finding the cheapest parts takes time and effort.

Once you've built your machine, the end product isn't something you'll be able to get serviced at your local Mac store. It doesn't even have a single warranty — each part has its own, which means you'll be in for a service nightmare if you have problems. You'll have to diagnose the cause, figure out which part or parts are involved, negotiate a return approval from each involved supplier, and then ship those parts out for replacement. One of the companies I bought parts from went out of business shortly thereafter, so I'm unlikely to get service if any of those items fail.

Even if your machine is running fine, you may experience odd hardware issues. When I shut down the Frankenmac, Mac OS X itself shuts down and the screen goes blank, but the fans and hard drive continue to run until I press the power button.

Software issues. Future system updates may cause problems with the Mac OS X installations on both the Frankenmac and the Open Computer. Since Apple obviously doesn't test for compatibility with these systems, the next software update could very well wreck everything. Though Psystar released a version of Mac OS X 10.5.3 for the Open Computer, the lack of support for software updates directly from Apple makes us extremely uncomfortable.

Frankenmac vs. Mac Pro

The Mac Pro (top) certainly boasts a much more elegant and functional internal design than the Frankenmac.



Legal matters. Perhaps most importantly, to make your machine run Mac OS X, you have to violate the OS X end-user license agreement – and perhaps copyright law, depending on how you go about building it. That's a big issue for people who might take the build-it-yourself route, and of course it calls into question the future of any company that attempts to make a business out of building Mac-compatible PCs.

There's nothing inherently wrong with making a PC that happens to use components known to work in Mac OS X, but whoever installs Mac OS X on that computer – you or the company supplying it to you – is entering an area that is legally grey at best and flat-out illegal at worst.

Design and aesthetics. Beyond the functional, legal, and moral issues, there are aesthetic and design concerns. While the Frankenmac's case is attractive, it's clearly not in the same league as the case on the Mac Pro. The back has some rough edges, the front door feels flimsy, and opening the case requires removing a couple of thumb screws and wiggling a side panel loose.

If you open the cases on a Mac Pro and the Frankenmac, you can really see the difference (see the illustration "Frankenmac vs. Mac Pro"). On the Mac Pro, all the cables are hidden, the slide-in drive bays are covered with numbered doors, non-user-accessible parts are hidden behind aluminium covers, and the entire thing has the look of the engine bay in a high-end automobile. The inside of the Frankenmac, on the other hand, bears a striking resemblance to the engine bay in my first car, a 1973 Chevy Vega: loose wires everywhere, sharp edges just waiting to cut an unsuspecting finger, and parts that clearly shouldn't be touched sitting right there in the open.

The Mac Pro has function going for it as well as form. Both machines let you mount internal drives in slide-in bays; but on the Mac Pro, the drive and bay slide right into the SATA connector. On the Frankenmac, I have to dig into a bundle of cables and fish out a SATA connector, and then thread it down to the drive bay. The Mac Pro provides eight RAM slots on two easy-to-use slide-out cards, while the Frankenmac has four slots located on a hard-to-reach portion of the motherboard.

The error of my ways. It was a lot of fun to taste the forbidden fruit of a non-Apple Mac. But the truth is, I'm not willing to live with all of the limitations of a build-your-own Mac. When I buy a machine from Apple, I know that one warranty covers everything, that all the parts have been designed to work together, that system updates won't leave me with a non-bootable system, and that as much thought went into the design of the interior of the machine as went into the exterior.

And as for Psystar, kudos for saving customers the effort I had to go through to build my Frankenmac, but on every other count the same story goes: it's not as well-designed, not as well-built, and the other issues make it just too much of a minefield.

I wish Apple would make the Mac model of my dreams, so I wouldn't be caught in a no-man's-land between the Mac Pro, the iMac, and the Mac mini. But even though my minitower fantasies remain unfulfilled, I'm more than happy letting Cupertino build my Macs for me. If I've learned anything from my journey with the Frankenmac, it's that Apple is much better at building Macs than I am. ☹

The clone wars

In April 1995, Power Computing CEO Steve Kahng was asked how his company, which had just released its first Mac clones, planned to compete with Apple Computer. "We're going to squeeze a nickel out of every dime," he said, smiling.

Two and a half years and three Apple CEOs later, Steve Jobs took back that dime. In between were the clone wars, which ravaged both Apple's reputation and its bottom line.

At first, Apple's decision to license its system software and motherboard designs to third-party manufacturers seemed like a good idea. Licensing Apple's crown jewels would jump-start the Mac platform in the same way that free access to the MS-DOS operating system had done for the PC platform, or so the reasoning went. But it didn't work out that way.

Apple announced its licensing program in December 1994, with Power Computing as the first licensee. A slew of other clone-makers jumped in.

On August 24, 1995, however, came an event that threw the entire Mac market into disarray: the release of Windows 95, which brought numerous Mac-like features to PCs for the first time.

Apple finished 1995 having sold a record 4.5 million Macs, but its wheels were already beginning to wobble, if not fall off entirely. In May 1996, Power Computing announced that it had sold 100,000 clones in its first year of operation. A Wall Street Journal article reported that a full one-half of the people who bought Power Computing machines would otherwise have bought a Mac from Apple. The licensing program was clearly cutting into Apple's bottom line.

Then, in December 1996, Apple announced that it had acquired NeXT Software, and with it that company's CEO, Steve Jobs. That was the good news; the bad news was that Apple sold only four million Macs in 1996. Apple's product line lumbered along, with ill-performing Performas and other humdrum machines. Power Computing was consistently shipping faster, less-expensive computers than Apple's.

Something had to be done. Jobs retook the reins at Apple, displacing Gil Amelio. After failing to renegotiate Apple's contracts with the clone vendors, Jobs came up with a masterstroke of banzai management. Since all clone licensing deals specified System 7, the next iteration of Apple's operating system was dubbed Mac OS 8, shutting out all the clone makers.

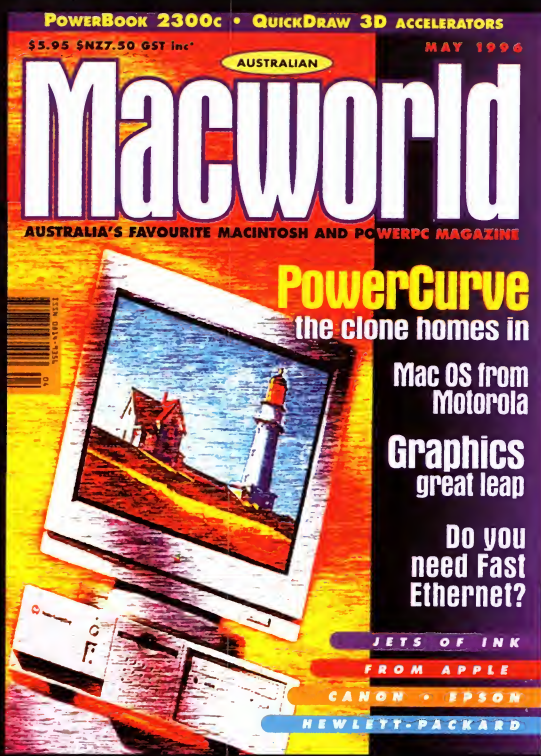
Jobs had pulled the plug on the clones, and in September Apple bought Power Computing's assets. Within eight months the last clone maker had

dropped out of the Mac market. The clone wars were over, but Apple had sustained serious casualties. In 1997, Apple sold a mere 2.8 million Macs. It took the company years to rebound.

Apple's move to Intel chips has led some observers to suggest that the clone days might return.

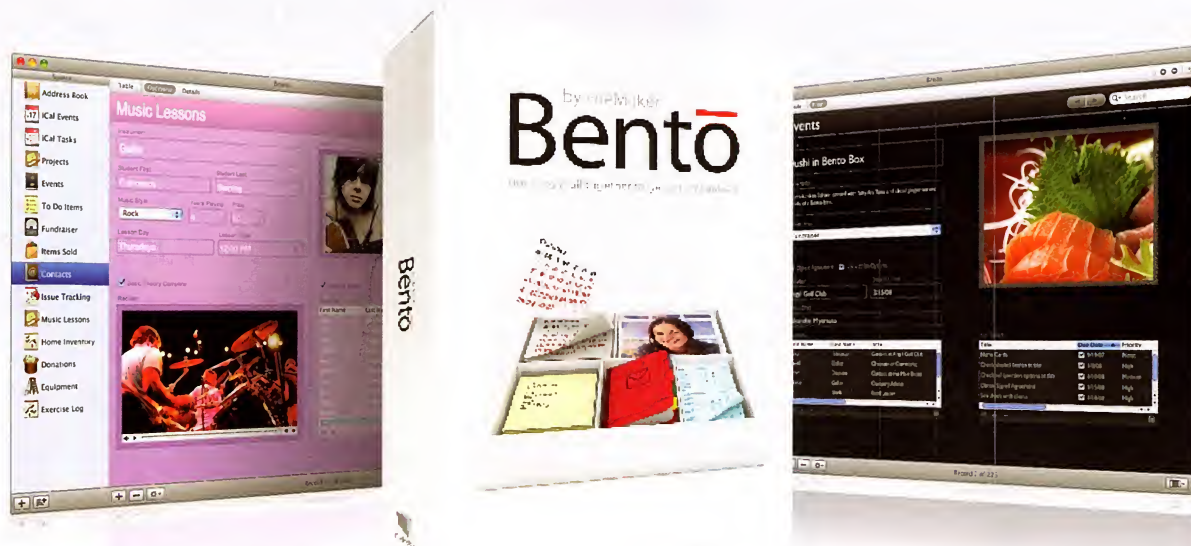
Apple seems to have had its fill of clones, if the words of Phil Schiller, the company's senior vice president of worldwide product marketing, are anything to go by. "We will not allow running Mac OS X on anything other than an Apple Mac," Schiller said in the wake of Apple's 2005 switch to Intel chips.

A few hobbyists may hack their PCs to run OS X, but the days of official Mac OS licensing are long gone. — Rik Myslewski



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Stairways to Heaven

Is there a "right way" to use software?

I'm asked this question frequently, but usually in an oblique way. "All students need to know how to use Microsoft Word/Excel/Powerpoint/insert name here" often crops up when parents and teachers discuss the role of Information Technologies in learning — usually confusing learning and training.

I've been consulting on office technologies since 1986 and I could fit all the proficient Word users I've come across around one desk. I've seen documents issued by trainers that clearly demonstrate that they don't know how to use the product they want to teach.

A few years ago, I was called by an ex-student who had "studied Word for three years at college" and was a self-proclaimed expert. She wanted to know if there was a quick way to construct a Table of Contents for a long document. "Just build it using the Styles used for heading and subheadings," I offered, to which she replied "what are styles?"

How many times have you come across this in your travels?

Even when you get a proficient user, they're usually so wedded to that one application or suite that they won't use any other. So, we get tables constructed in Excel, PowerPoint for animation and Word used for publishing (shudder).

And here's a dilemma. Maybe this is all OK. It looks fine when printed out — the computer equivalent of "it'll be alright on the night" — but, really, it won't. It's Hell and I want Heaven.

There are two things wrong here. The data that I prepare for printing may eventually need to be re-purposed



for a magazine layout, for inclusion in a web site or even for an autocue. So paragraph spacing using carriage returns, centring using spaces and so forth will cause grief if typefaces or column width change.

The same arguments can be made for images. What really makes Moviemaker on Windows inferior to iMovie, in my opinion, is that the decision as to final format is made before import in Moviemaker (I have other reservations, but in this context, it's a deal breaker). In iMovie, I can do all my editing, then choose to output as DV, for the web or even 3gpp for a mobile phone. The point is that, in a multimedia world, I may not know all my eventual output formats, or, more importantly, I may want to produce similar content for many different devices.

Also, I may need to ship the data into and out of another application, as the original software may not do what I want.

Case in point: a year seven class who need to produce display packaging for their recently completed product. It needs to be constructed from one A3 sheet of light card, with as little cutting and joining as possible (nice link with nets in Maths by the way)

Everyone wants to use Word to do this, so let's revisit the problem. We need to draw accurately-dimensioned lines for folding, have flexibility in typeface and type positioning and

be able to manipulate graphics as backgrounds, highlights and callouts. Will Word do that? We try and it won't, so the question then becomes: what can we use?

Kids try out different products — so much more interesting than teaching one. We try Geometer's Sketchpad, a maths program (it's good at doing lines), Photoshop Elements (it's good at doing images) and Word Art, but how to put the whole thing together?


We settle on Pages which, as part of the iWork suite, is now available to Australian schools as a \$319 site licence for up to 500 students and 50 staff machines, and discuss other, similar programs and approaches. A powerful 45-minute lesson that was great fun to be a part of.

However, now I've got another piece of software involved and I'm back to my dilemma. How much of the mechanics of any program do you teach?

My Science background, with its precision and accuracy, compels me to be a bit anal here and force the issue, but do I have the time? Will I compromise the intention of the unit of work if I do so?

I decide that, in this instance, I won't be so prescriptive — the box design, with its need for accurately-positioned lines, will be enough. I will point out the re-purposing issues, play the "someone else may need to work on this so we need to do it right" card, but I suspect it will turn into the yada-yada teacher-speak that kids always put into the background.

But, I'm going to reshape this unit to give us time to do it right and for them to realise why it is right. I might split the groups into art departments and wordsmiths to force the issue. I'll rebuild my stairway to heaven.

"Yes, there are two paths you can go by, but in the long run there's still time to change the road you're on" 

Hotlinks

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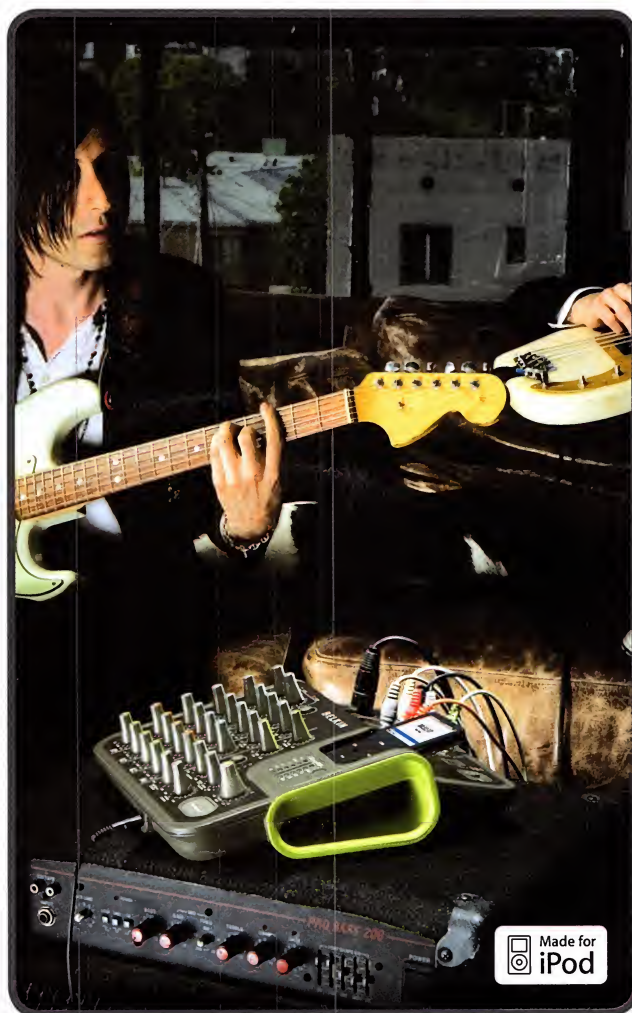
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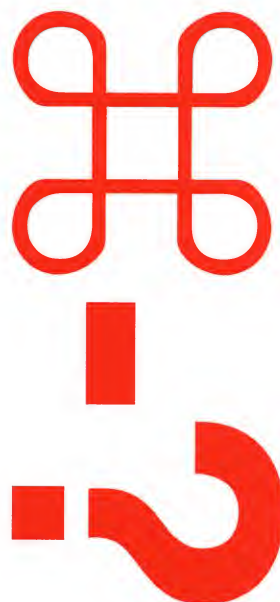
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Quicksilver



Save time, type less

Until Apple starts rolling thought-controlled Macs off the assembly line, we'll still depend on keyboards, mice, and trackpads to tell our computers what to do. But some of the ways we control our Macs take more time than others. Here's how to accomplish the same tasks while typing and mousing less.



Keyboard shortcuts rule.

Still using menus to access your programs' commands? Keyboard shortcuts are called shortcuts for a reason. Instead of choosing File: Open from the menu, press **⌘-O**; instead of Edit: Copy, press **⌘-C**. Making this simple change will save you a significant amount of time and muscle fatigue.

You'll find common keyboard shortcuts listed to the right of command names in menus. (If you're mystified by what you see there, check out the sidebar "Decode shortcut symbols.") The Mac uses many common shortcuts across all programs — for instance, **⌘-S** for Save and **⌘-Z** to Undo an action you just did. That makes it easy to develop a repertoire you can use at

any time. (See the sidebar "10 Essential shortcuts everyone should know.") But many other menu items offer shortcuts as well, and the more you learn, the more seconds you can shave off common tasks.

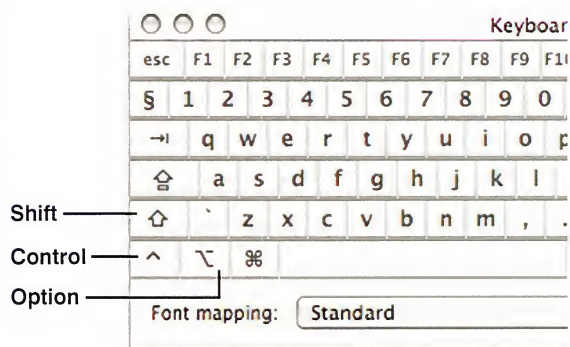
Search for Apple shortcuts.

Browse your menus to find keyboard combinations for the things you do the most. Discover even more by choosing the Help menu in the Finder or an Apple program you use a lot, and then typing shortcuts or program name shortcuts in the Search field. (A few programs, such as Apple's iTunes and iPhoto, even have a Help > Keyboard Shortcuts menu item.) In some cases you'll see a help topic leading to a special page that shows shortcuts, some

of which don't display in menus.

In Apple's Safari, for example, you can open a page in a new tab by pressing **⌘** while clicking on a link or bookmark. Go to the Google search box by typing **⌘-option-F**. Press the spacebar to jump down one screen on a web page, or shift-spacebar to jump up.

Some programs have special shortcuts for tasks that don't involve menus. In iPhoto '08, for example, you can set shortcuts for the most common keywords you use to tag your photos.



Decode shortcut symbols. Confused by the strange symbols you see in the shortcuts listed in your program menus? Here's a guide to the right keys.

Choose Window: Show Keywords (or better yet, press ⌘-K) to see a list of keywords. Drag the ones you want to use to the top section of the window. You'll see a letter at the right of the tag bubble showing its shortcut, usually the first letter of the tag. (You can change these shortcuts if necessary by clicking on Edit Keywords, clicking on Shortcut, and then typing a different letter in the Shortcut field.) To apply keywords to your pictures, browse your iPhoto library with the Keywords window visible and then select a photo and press a key to tag it.

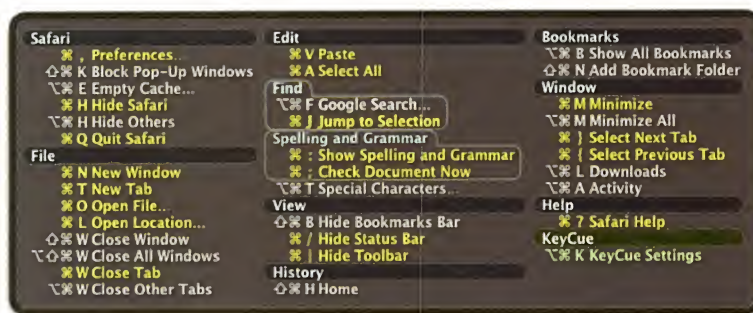
Find and create Office shortcuts.

Microsoft Office programs not only contain a multitude of shortcuts, but also allow you to create your own shortcut for any command. To view all Microsoft Word 2008 shortcuts, choose Tools > Customize Keyboard. (Access the same dialog box in Word or Excel 2004 by selecting Tools > Customize > Customize Keyboard.) From here, you can change existing shortcuts or add your own for menu items that don't have any.

Learn from cheat sheets.

While you can browse your favourite programs' menus and help files to uncover shortcuts, there's a quicker way to see at a glance almost all the shortcuts you can use. With Ergonis Software's KeyCue 4.1 (see "Hotlinks") utility, you press and hold the ⌘ key for a half-second to display a window listing all the keyboard shortcuts available in the current program (see the illustration "View all shortcuts"). Access any of these by pressing an additional key — for example, in many programs, P to print. (You're already holding down the ⌘ key.) Or use your mouse to click on a command in the list. Using KeyCue as a ready reference will also help you learn the shortcuts you use most, so that eventually you can type them directly.

KeyCue's one shortcoming is that it can't show the hidden shortcuts some programs, such as Microsoft Office, include. It accesses only the ones displayed in menus.



View all shortcuts Using a utility such as KeyCue, you can see all of Safari's menu-item shortcuts at a single glance

Explore shortcuts for the web.

The programs on your Mac aren't the only ones with shortcuts — many web applications use them, too. If you use Gmail, you can find a list of shortcuts (such as C for Compose, to create a new message; N for Next message; R for Reply; and so on) in Gmail's help files (see "Hotlinks"). Yahoo Mail offers a similar range of shortcuts (see "Hotlinks"). Likewise, you can use your keyboard for cruising through your Google Docs (see "Hotlinks").

Create custom shortcuts with OS X.

Some programs — like those in the Office suite — let you create your own shortcuts for the tasks you perform often, but most don't. That's where OS X 10.5 (Leopard) or OS X 10.4 (Tiger) can help. If the menu commands you use don't

have keyboard shortcuts, you can in many cases add your own.

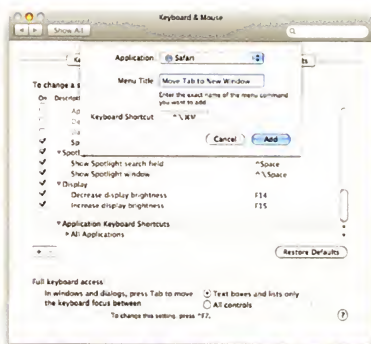
Open the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane and click on the Keyboard Shortcuts tab. Click on the plus-sign (+) button below the shortcut list. A sheet opens. Using the Application pop-up menu, choose the program for which you want to set the shortcut. If you don't see it in the list, scroll to the bottom, select Other, and navigate to that program in your Applications folder. If you want to create a shortcut that works in almost all your programs, then select All Applications in the pop-up menu. (The shortcut won't apply to some older programs or anything running in Classic mode.)

Now, in the Menu Title field, type the exact name of the menu item for which you want to set a shortcut. Make sure it's spelled correctly, or

10 essential shortcuts everyone should know

KEYSTROKE*	ACTION
⌘-shift-A	Opens your Applications folder while in the Finder
⌘-double-click	Opens a folder in a new Finder window
option-drag	Copies a file instead of moving it in the Finder
⌘-option-drag	Makes an alias of selected item(s)
⌘-delete	Moves selected item to the Trash while in the Finder
⌘-tab	Cycles through all open programs
F11	Shows desktop (moving aside all open windows)
F9	Shows all windows
⌘-spacebar	Starts a Spotlight search from anywhere
⌘-Z	Undoes last action

*If you're using a laptop, you may need to add the fn key.



Set up shortcuts. Enter the exact name of a menu item, and assign it any key combination that's not already in use.

your shortcut won't work (see the screenshot "Set up shortcuts"). If the menu item's name contains an ellipsis (...), type option-semicolon (;) to create that character. Click on the Keyboard Shortcut field and press the key combination you want to use. Click on OK to save the shortcut. If the program is open, quit and relaunch it. Your keyboard shortcut will appear in the menu, and you can use it whenever you want.

If your shortcut doesn't work, a different menu item may already be assigned to those keys. (Tip: avoid using the option key.) Unfortunately, you'll be warned of problems only if you're creating a Finder shortcut. Remove the problem shortcut by scrolling down the Keyboard Shortcuts list, clicking on the triangle next to the program, selecting the shortcut, and clicking on the minus-sign (-) button. Then try another key combination. If you ever want to get rid of all your custom shortcuts, click on Restore Defaults.

Type less. Keyboard shortcuts aren't the only time-savers available to you. For instance, you may find yourself repeatedly typing the same things — your name, street address, e-mail address, or phrases you often need when writing a report or novel. Wouldn't it be wonderful if instead of typing circumbendibus, you could just type ccm and let your Mac do the rest?

Try text-expansion software.

With software such as Riccardo Ettore's Typelt4Me 4 (see "Hotlinks") or Smile On My Mac's TextExpander 2 (see "Hotlinks"), you'll never have to type out your mailing address again. These programs let you set up a shortcut for long pieces of text, and you can even include line breaks. For example, to insert your address in your text, all you'd have to type is aad.

Save time launching programs.

When you want to launch a piece of software, you probably either click on its icon in the Dock, if the program resides there, or go to your Applications folder to double-click on its icon. (Speaking of shortcuts, when you're in the Finder, you can open your Applications folder by pressing ⌘-shift-A.) But there are quicker ways to access your programs.

Use Spotlight. The first way is to use Spotlight. In Leopard, Spotlight groups applications at the top of the results list. So for instance, press ⌘-spacebar to bring up the Spotlight menu and type saf; you'll find that Safari is likely the top hit. If it's not, it will show in the Applications group, and you can open it without having to dig through your Applications folder. Spotlight can do this with any program, including those in your /Applications/Utilities folder.

Employ a launcher. If you're ready to become a hard-core keyboard user, you might want to look into launcher software. Three such applications in particular offer quick program access; in addition, they let you open files just by typing a few letters and even let you perform operations on files. Objective Development's LaunchBar 4.3 (see "Hotlinks") is my favourite. It does all of the above, plus it lets you browse your Mac's files from its own menu, run commands on files, execute Google searches, run AppleScripts, and much more.

Peter Maurer's Butler 4.1.5 (see "Hotlinks") and Blacktree's Quicksilver (see "Hotlinks") offer a whole range of shortcuts and timesaving features. For example, you can create pop-up web search boxes to search any site from anywhere, control iTunes playback from any program, use multiple Clipboards, or create pop-up menus that let you navigate any Finder folder from any application. It's worth trying them out to see what they can do for you, and especially to discover the dozens of features each of these programs offers.

Make the keyboard your friend.

All of these strategies will help you keep your hands off your mouse. You may well find that you get more done in less time when you learn everything you can do with your keyboard. — Kirk McElhearn

Easily create new tabs in Safari

Apple's Safari has always boasted some good tab-bar tricks — drag a tab horizontally to rearrange your tabs, drag vertically to rip a tab off and create a new window showing that web page, and move tabs between windows by dragging from the tab bar of one window to the tab bar of another. But Safari 3.1 includes one very useful addition: if you double-click in an empty space on the tab bar, the web browser creates a new empty tab. True, you can do the same by pressing ⌘-T, but sometimes your hand is already on the mouse when you realise that you want a new tab. If you can't see the tab bar, select View: Show Tab Bar to make the bar visible at all times, even when you have only one site loaded. — Rob Griffiths



Hotlinks

gimp.org

GNU Image manipulation Program source code

darwingimp.sourceforge.net

A compiled version of GIMP

www.inkscape.org

Inkscape

www.kronenberg.org/ies4osx/

Internet Explorer for OS X

www.winehq.com

Wine

darwine.sourceforge.net

Darwine

www.macports.org

www.finkproject.org

Catalogues of X11 apps

Run apps in X11

If you've ever thought about running Unix programs on your Mac, you might have assumed that meant you were stuck with the command-line interface. But you aren't.

Go to Leopard's Applications: Utilities folder and double-click on X11.app. That will open xterm. At first, you might think it's just another command-line tool like Mac OS X's Terminal. But xterm is actually a gateway to something much bigger: the X11 graphical computing environment.

From X11 (which runs side by side with Mac OS X's native Aqua environment),

you can run a host of graphical Unix programs — applications that haven't been fully ported to Mac OS X — as well as applications on remote Linux or Unix systems. Here's a quick look at X11 and a few of the things you can do with it.

(Note: If you're still running Tiger, you won't find X11 installed by default; you'll have to insert your Mac OS X install discs, run the Optional Installs package, and install it from there.)

Where to get X11 programs. The OS X install of X11 comes with a few programs of its own. For example, type `/usr/X11/bin/xeyes &` at the X11 command-line prompt, and you'll open xeyes, a little program that puts a pair of animated eyes on your X11 desktop; move your cursor, and the eyes will follow it. Type `/usr/X11/bin/xcalc &`, and you'll get an X11-based calculator. To get a list of the X11 programs that come with OS X, type `ls /usr/X11/bin`. You can then get more information about any of the programs listed there by typing `man program name`. That will summon the Unix manpage viewer and the text-only documentation for that program.

To be honest, the X11 applications that come with OS X aren't all that exciting. To get more interesting ones, you have to download them.

The X11 program that I most highly recommend is GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program; see "Hotlinks"). It's a great image editor that's actually comparable in some ways to Adobe Photoshop. If you download it from gimp.org,

you'll get a huge pile of source code that you'll then have to build into an operable program. It's far easier to download the GIMP binary from Wilbur Loves Apple (see "Hotlinks"). There, you'll find GIMP 2.4.5 for both OS X 10.5 and 10.4 (Intel and PowerPC). Once you download that, you can just open the disk image and copy Gimp.app to your Applications folder.

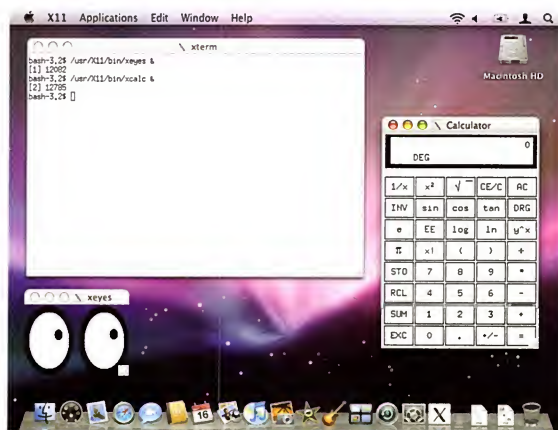
While GIMP may be the best-known X11 program that will run on the Mac, there are hundreds of others worth checking out: Inkscape (see "Hotlinks") is a free vector-drawing program similar to Adobe Illustrator. If you want to run Microsoft Internet Explorer on your Intel Mac, you can do so with ies4osx (see "Hotlinks"), an X11-based application that uses the Wine (see "Hotlinks") Windows emulator

to run any of four different versions of Explorer. Note that ies4osx uses a Mac-specific variant of Wine called Darwine (see "Hotlinks"), which is provided as a download on the ies4osx site along with ies4osx itself.

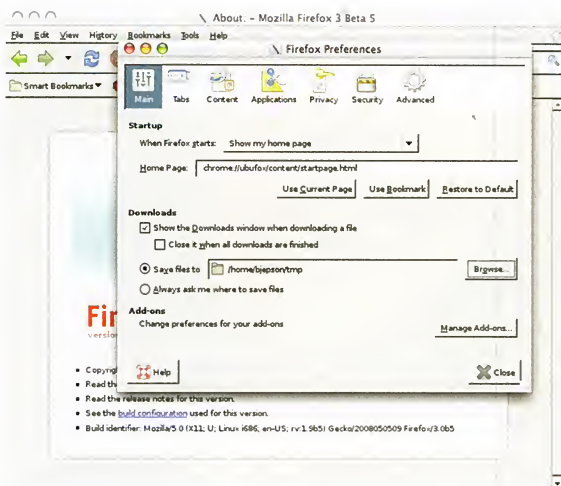
Finally, if you really want to explore the world of X11 software, you can download and install either MacPorts or Fink (see "Hotlinks"). Both are open-source applications that attempt to catalogue and help you install dozens of different X11 programs. But be warned: If you're not familiar with the command line and Unix file management, don't bother with either of them.

Different Interfaces. Whatever applications you want to try, you'll notice immediately that they have their own look-and-feel, and it's different from OS X's.

For example, if you open GIMP, xcalc, and xeyes at the same time and then switch between them, you'll notice that the X11 menu bar at the top of the screen remains the same no matter which application has the focus. If you can get used to not zipping up to the top of the screen to find a program's menus, you should do just fine with X11. Individual X11 programs often have menus and other in-



OS X's X11 programs. The X11 applications in OS X — including xeyes and xcalc, shown here — aren't exactly scintillating, but you'll find plenty of others available on the internet.



Remote Firefox. Using X11, you can run applications — such as the Linux version of Firefox — over a remote connection.

terface elements of their own in addition to that overall X11 menu bar, and those elements aren't consistent from one program to the next. For example, to open a menu in xterm, you control-click; other programs display their menus at the top of their own windows.

Other interface conventions vary in X11. For instance, most of the time you can highlight a text selection in an X11 application, and select Edit: Copy or press `⌘-C` to copy it. However, when you switch to another X11 program to paste in that selection, you'll notice that the Edit: Paste menu item in X11's global menu is greyed out; `⌘-V` won't do anything. Instead, each X11 application uses its own pasting command. Most commonly, you'll press the middle mouse button to paste; if your mouse doesn't have three buttons, go to Preferences: Input, select the Emulate Three Button Mouse option, and follow the instructions.

Running X11 remotely. If you have access to a remote Unix or Linux system (either in your office or on the internet), you can connect to it via Secure Shell (SSH) and then run remote X11 applications that will display on your Mac's desktop.

For this to work, the remote computer needs to be configured to permit SSH logins and to allow X11 to run over SSH. To do this, open xterm and type `ssh -X user_name@host_name` (replacing user_name with your remote user name and host_name with the host name or IP address of the remote computer). Log in with your password.

That done, try running an X11 application: xterm, xeyes, firefox, or anything else that's installed on the remote system. Depending on the speed of the connection, that application should open fairly quickly (see the screenshot "Remote Firefox"). If you get the message "error: Can't open display: DISPLAY is not set," this usually means the administrator of the remote computer needs to enable the X11Forwarding option in the `sshd_config` file before you log in. — *Brian Jepsen*

Take screenshots with iPhone

If you've ever seen something interesting on your iPhone's screen and wanted to capture it — or, more practically, you're someone who writes about the iPhone and has lamented its inability to take screen shots — you'll be happy about a small feature in the iPhone 2.0 software. Yes, you can now take screen shots on your iPhone. It's a trick that developers have been whispering about for some time now, but we're happy to see that this geeky feature has made it into the shipping version of the software. To take a screen shot, hold down the home button and then push the top button. The screen will flash and the resulting image will be placed on your camera roll. From there, you can sync it back to your computer via iPhoto, e-mail it to friends, or do anything else you can do with any other photo in your camera roll.

You might think you'll never use such an esoteric feature, but some day there'll be some bit of information on a web site you want to write down but don't have a pencil, or you'll figure out that complicated level on Enigmo and need to tell your friends, and you'll thank me. — *Jason Snell*



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iPhone not included.

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Check your AirPort speed

STM Query
of the month

There was quite a bit of chat in the 10.5.3 update thread re the speed at which AirPort was operating. How do you find out this info? I've had a look but can't find it. I'm not concerned about it but just interested. I've not had the problems reported by some with the Status bar variability (under 10.5.2) but wanted to see how my connection was going generally.

(Interestingly when I'm using Windows XP under Boot-Camp there is a small status indicator onscreen to tell about the connection speed.)

gazza

Two ways to check that I know of - the Network Utility has the connect speed in its main window — AirPort is usually interface en1. Much quicker is to hold down the Option key while clicking the AirPort menu item. — Sean McNamara

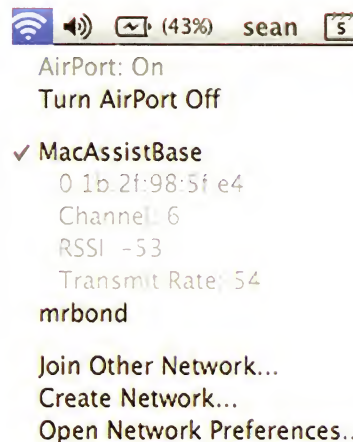
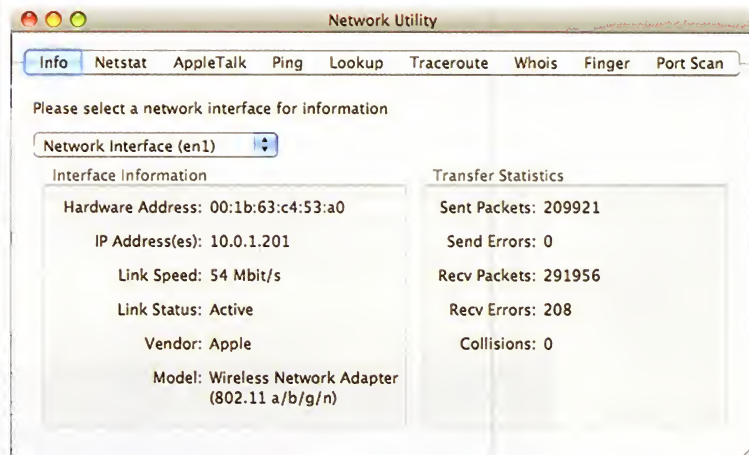
Each month STM (02 8338 0222) gives a medium Rogue backpack to the Australian Macworld reader

who send in or posts to the forum the most intriguing query.

STM's medium rogue backpack creates mischief for would-be thieves by concealing the laptop compartment from view and hiding it in an internal wall of the bag — so nobody knows you're carrying a laptop except you.

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Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au or post in the forums at www.macworld.com.au/forums. All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.



Page-scroll Mail's message list

If you use Mail and its preview pane to read your messages, you've probably noticed some odd behaviour. For example, say you've clicked on a message in the list. If you press the up or down arrow, Mail selects the previous or next message in the message list. If you press page up or page down, however, the message list does not jump up or down a full page — in fact, the list doesn't move at all. Instead, page down takes you to the next page of your message.

On one hand, this makes sense — you can read lengthy messages in the preview pane and browse your list of messages with the keyboard, without having to switch the

focus from one section to the other. On the other hand, it's inconsistent — why is one set of keystrokes sent to one place while another goes elsewhere? If you want to move the message list by more than a message at a time, you have to resort to dragging the scroll bar with your mouse.

Someone at Apple thought this was a bit odd, too, and included a workaround. If you press and hold the control key and then press page up or page down, the message list will move up or down a page at a time. To preview a different message, you still need to use the arrow keys (or the mouse) to change the selection. — Rob Griffiths



Send photos at the right size

I recently had to chase through this issue for my brother, and thought it might be helpful for others.

The problem was that when e-mailing from iPhoto using Mail (by clicking on the e-mail button within iPhoto) the images always were sent as small files, regardless of what size was selected in iPhoto.

The resolution came when I discovered a small drop-down menu in the lower right corner of the new e-mail window in Mail. It allows the user to specify size of the images sent as attachments. However, this setting overrides the setting in iPhoto. Hey presto,

large images sent! This is a simple thing, but one that frustrated my brother for several days. Hope this helps someone else.

"Danger Mouse" via the AMW forums

Each month, Microsoft gives a Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits (via e-mail or the web site) the best and most useful undocumented tip. Enjoy wireless freedom with the Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 — no transceiver to connect or lose! Keep USB ports free for other devices, and take it with you in a convenient carrying case. Microsoft's high-definition

laser technology means the mouse is more responsive, more precise and tracks more smoothly than standard laser mice. It also features a battery indicator light and an on/off switch to conserve power when it's not in use. The ergonomically-designed Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 features four fully-configurable buttons and a scroll wheel. E-mail your tip with the subject header "Help reader tip", including your full name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au or use the "Submit a tip" button on the Help section of www.macworld.com.au. All reader tips become the sole property of Niche Media.

Control the new iTunes visualizers

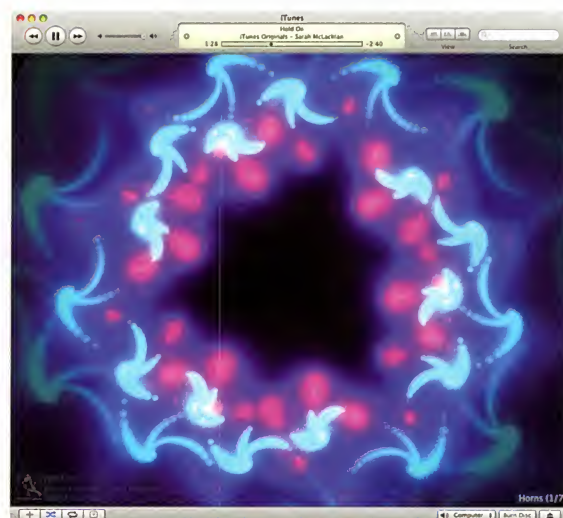
Visualizers are iTunes' eye candy — they're a mix of strange, flowing, glowing, morphing, hypnotic shapes and colours that move and sway on screen as you listen to music. Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) adds three new iTunes visualizers — Lathe, Jelly, and Stix. To see one, choose View: Visualizer and select it by name in the menu. Press \mathbb{A} -T to activate it. Do the visualizers have any tricks? Of course!

All three will display an album information overlay when you press I. To see the frame rate of the current visualizer, press F. That's all the special features Lathe has. Stix hides a few more — press the up arrow once, for example, to create a mirror image of the current visual effect. Press the down arrow to change the speed of the effect.

It's Jelly that has the most hidden features. Press the up or down arrow to cycle among different jelly styles. If you see one you like, press M to lock it (otherwise iTunes will automatically cycle among all seven). When in lock mode, the arrow keys won't do anything; press M again to unlock Jelly, and you can then use the arrow keys again. Press and hold 1 or 2, and the centre of the current jelly will move farther away or much closer to your viewpoint. Press and hold any combination of 8, 9, and 0 (zero), and you'll add an extra "glow" to certain areas of the jelly. Press and hold all three keys, and you may

wish you were wearing sunglasses at your desk as the effect strobes (see the screenshot "iTunes eye candy"). All of these number-key effects are temporary; they stop as soon as you release the keys.

— Rob Griffiths



iTunes eye candy. Using some hidden commands, you can control certain features within the iTunes visualizers. Here I've given the Jelly visualizer some added visual pop by holding down a few special keys.

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Create iCal events from anywhere

While I rely on Apple's iCal to help me track meetings and to-do items, I've always found the actual process of adding new events much more complex than it needs to be. Typically I'll be in some other program when I realise that I need to create an event, which means I must launch iCal, find the right date, double-click to create the event, and then press \mathbb{E} to bring up the Edit Event box. Thankfully, a quick Automator workflow can make all this a lot easier.

Launch Automator (/Applications). In the sheet that appears, click on Custom and then click on Choose. The Automator workspace will appear. Click once on Calendar in the Library column on the left. Then drag New iCal Events from the right-hand Actions column into the blank work area on the right. This action creates a new iCal event with the data you provide, but you can also make it display a dialog box first, so that you can enter information for the event on-the-fly. At the bottom of the action, click on Options and then select the Show This Action When This Workflow Runs option.

That's the only required change, but feel free to change the Add To and Alarm settings. Once you have the dialog box set up as you'd like it to appear, select File: Save. When the Save sheet appears, name your workflow ("Create iCal Event", perhaps), and choose a save location such as your user folder/Documents. Select Application from the File Format pop-up menu and then click on Save.

Now quit Automator, find the file you just created, and double-click on it. After a brief delay, you'll see a New iCal Events dialog box on screen; fill it in and then click on Continue. Your little mini-application will then silently add this new event to iCal. If iCal isn't running, it will launch but will politely stay in the background.

— Rob Griffiths



Annotate non-PDF images in 10.5's Preview

The version of Preview in OS X 10.5 has some nice additions to its 10.4 predecessor, including more annotation abilities for PDFs. What I didn't know, until very recently, is that you can also annotate JPEGs, TIFFs, and other non-PDF images. You might not think that's the case, because if you open such an image in Preview, while the Tools > Annotate menu is active, all the sub-menus beneath Annotate are greyed out. How can you use a non-active menu item?

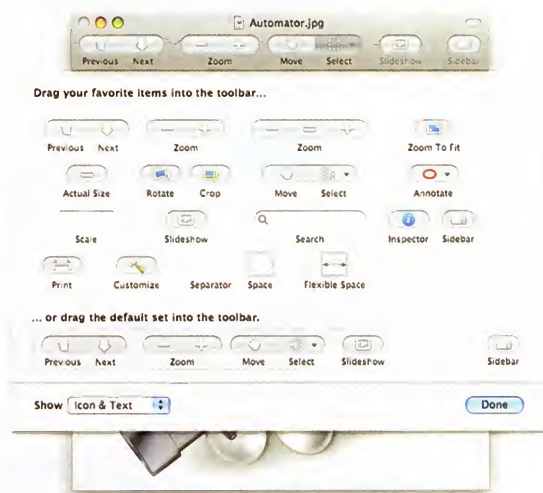
In this case, the answer to that question is "by using the same tool on the toolbar." In Preview, select View > Customize Toolbar, then drag the Annotate tool onto the toolbar. Now open a JPEG, TIFF, PNG, etc. Click and hold on the Annotate menu, and you'll see a drop-down menu showing the four available annotations. Select the tool you'd like to use, then just click-and-drag in the image file to add that annotation.

Once you've placed an annotation, you can also make modifications to it. For the shape annotations, use the minus (-) and equal (=) keys to make the shape's lines thinner or thicker. To change the colour of a shape, bring up the colour picker (\mathbb{E} -Shift- C, or View > Show Colors). Select the colour you'd like to use, and the shape will instantly change to reflect your selection.

If you're working with the Note tool, the colour picker will change the colour of the note's text. You can also change the font by using the Fonts panel (\mathbb{E} -T or View > Show Fonts). Select the text within the note, then choose the

font face and size you'd like to use. (You can also change the size of the font in the note using the minus and equal signs.) It may look like you can also use the buttons at the top of the Fonts panel (underline, strikethrough, shadow, etc.), but you can't — while those features will show up as you edit, they'll vanish as soon as you click elsewhere in your Preview document.

If you're annotating a PDF, you can't use the line thickness tools, nor can you change the font face or size of your notes. About the only thing you can do is change the colour of shapes on a PDF, using the colour wheel. — Rob Griffiths





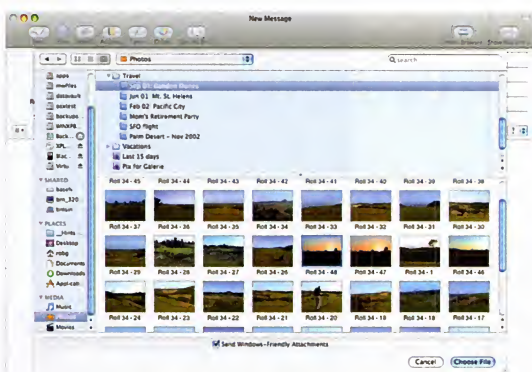
Do more with the media browser

Leopard's media browser makes it easy to look through your photos, music, and movies before opening them or inserting them in a document or e-mail message. You can access the media browser from within any media-enabled program — such as a web browser, Apple's TextEdit, or Microsoft Word — by selecting File: Open (or access it from other similar menus, such as Mail's File: Insert File menu). In the sidebar of the Open dialog box, scroll down to the bottom, where you'll find the Media section. Click on Photos, Music, or Movies, and it will appear (see the screenshot "Browse your media").

The media browser has a couple of tricks up its sleeve. For instance, you can display your media in either icon or list view by control-clicking on an empty area of the media browser — next to a picture, for example. When you do, a contextual menu will appear. Choose Display As List, and then control-click again to see a new Show Columns entry in the contextual menu. Select it and a submenu will let you specify which columns to make visible.

This trick is great if you need more information to help you determine which particular media file you'd like.

You can also preview your media here, much the way you can using Leopard's Quick Look in the Finder. Select an item in the media browser and then press the spacebar. If you've chosen a music or movie file, it will start playing; photos will zoom to fill the media browser's display area. Press the spacebar again to stop the preview. With both photos and movies, you can use the left and right arrows to move from one photo or movie to the next. If you're listening to a song, the up and down arrows will move you between songs, but you'll have to press the spacebar twice to stop the previous song and start the next. — Rob Griffiths



Browse Your Media When you're using a program that supports photos, music, and movies, Leopard's Media Browser makes it easy to browse through your media to find just the right file.

Save all Mail attachments to iPhoto

When you receive an e-mail message with attachments, Apple's Mail — both the Leopard and OS X 10.4 (Tiger) versions — displays a Save button, with a triangle drop-down indicator immediately next to the word Save in the message's header. Typically, a triangle indicator like that reacts to a mouse click, expanding to show more details. But in Mail that's not the case. Instead, if you click on the triangle, Mail saves all of that message's attachments, as it would if you had clicked on Save.

However, Mail can do more with attachments, as long as you know the secret: click and hold on the Save button, and a menu appears, listing each attached file's name along with a Save As button. Select any individual file, and you'll save just that attachment to disk. The hidden gem here is the final menu item — Add To iPhoto. With one click and hold of the button, you can add all of a message's attached images to iPhoto. It's all or nothing — you can't pick and choose among images. Still, if you have relatives who are constantly sending updated kid pictures, this little menu can be a time-saver. — Rob Griffiths

Quickly capture video frames

There are lots of ways to capture single frames from QuickTime videos. You can, for instance, open the movie in QuickTime Player, find the frame you'd like to grab, and press ⌘-C to copy that frame. Switch to Preview and press ⌘-N, and you'll see your copied frame in a new document. You can also use the built-in shortcut for taking a picture of part of your screen — press ⌘-shift-4, and drag around the frame you'd like to capture. But here's a third easy way that takes advantage of Leopard's Quick Look mode.

First, select the video in the Finder and press the spacebar to play the video in Quick Look. Press the Pause button at the bottom of the Quick Look window, and then use the timeline slider to find the exact frame you want to capture. Click and hold somewhere over the image, and then drag and drop what you captured onto your desktop (or an open Finder window).

The result will be a Movie Clipping file that will open in QuickTime when you double-click on it. From there, you can use ⌘-C to copy the image and paste it in Preview, or (if you have QuickTime Pro) you can paste it into a new QuickTime document or use File: Export to save it in another format. — Rob Griffiths

Fix camera glitches

In the world of digital imaging, arguably the biggest and most annoying bugs that beset our efforts to bring home the winning picture are self-made, DIY foul ups. They're all sitting inside your camera, waiting for your inattention. And these you can fix yourself.

Fault: Blurred Images. You take that once-in-a-lifetime shot of your son scoring a goal in soccer. It looks OK on the LCD but when you get it home it's blurred. Why?

Was it camera blur caused by your own shaky hand? The message is that if you're shooting action the less that moves the better — on the camera side. Let the action be the prime movement.

Hold the camera steady; brace your arms into your sides. Get as close to the action as possible: if you use a longer end of the zoom you'll need to apply a higher level of operator efficiency. If you have to use a long focal length, use as fast a shutter speed as possible; to help with this, select a higher ISO — up to about 400 should still give you a printable image that will deliver a pixel-free result.

Use the burst mode (if your camera has it) to capture a run of images with

at least one shot that is sharp and looks good. One camera, the Nikon Coolpix S600, has an Active Child mode: frame and select the active child — the camera tracks and focuses on the moving subject as you shoot. Make sure you focus the camera on the subject or select an auto focus mode that will follow a moving player; if the subject is fairly distant, lock the focus on infinity.

Fault: Murky shadows, burning highlights. Many cameras have modes that will optimise the capture of highlights and shadows. These really work and will deliver a far better printed result that has an optimum rendering of highlights and shadows.

Ricoh's Caplio R7 camera has a mode in which, even after a shot is captured, lets you adjust the brightness and contrast, the skew of the image as well as "colour toning" in-camera — the corrected image is then saved as a separate file.

You can even fix the problem later in Photoshop: in Layers, duplicate the image; then select Screen, which will lighten the composite image; reduce the Opacity of the uppermost image; Flatten. Then save.

Fault: Dim picture. A common problem and one that's easily fixed. If you make a shot of a person against a bright background — sky, beach, snow — adjust the exposure over-ride to prevent the auto exposure system from exposing for the bright background; an extra f-stop will do it. This

way, the sky background will burn out but the more important subject will be correctly exposed.

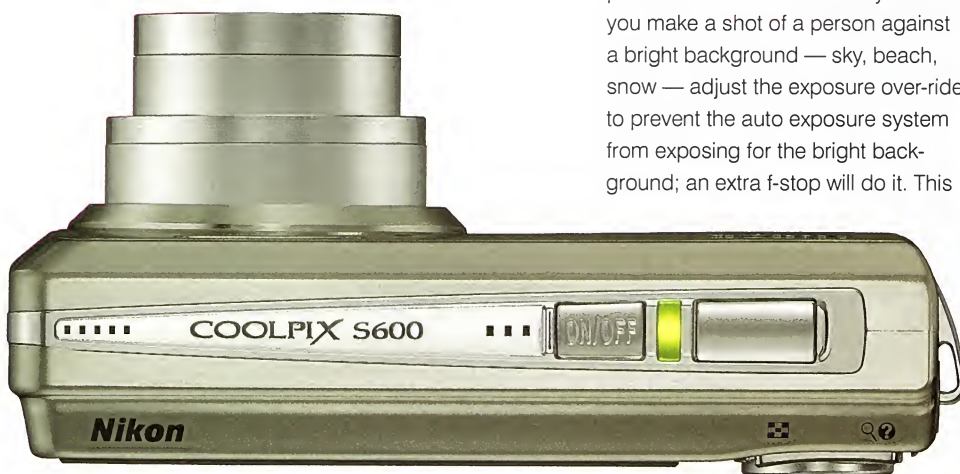
Another and far easier option is to use one of the scene modes that many cameras supply: choose beach, snow or similar.

Movie zooms. Many people, including this writer, use a digicam to make quick if crude movies. It's convenient and, with a decent size memory card loaded, you can capture a reasonably lengthy production.

However, the camera makers aren't stupid: if they make still cameras so ultra-capable in the movie department there would be no market for true video camcorders.

Digicams for movies are not so good in less than bright light. For one thing, the shooting speed of video demands a shutter speed that most times causes under-exposure. The message: shoot in sunlight and no indoors movie making with a digicam!

— Barrie Smith



Helpers

- Keep your lens clean. Use lens wipes — available from camera stores.
- If the camera just won't go, perhaps it's a simple matter of the battery not making a correct contact with the terminals inside the camera. Remove battery, wipe battery and camera terminals, replace.
- The LCD screen goes off just when you need it: maybe you need to reset the power off interval to a longer period so it doesn't self-cancel.
- The flash won't fire. Reset to "auto" or "forced on".

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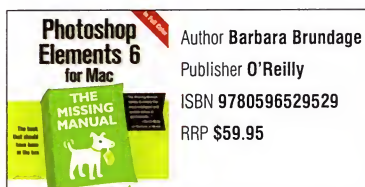




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Photoshop Elements 6 for Mac — the Missing Manual

takes a comprehensive reference-style approach to the latest version of this popular photo-editing and organising software.

The first of seven parts unscrambles the maze of windows and palettes and shows you how to move your photos in and out of Elements. Quick rotation, resizing and cropping come next. The second part uncovers the magic of the Quick Fix window, and reveals the essential skills of making selections and using layers.

Part three covers basic and advanced retouching, how to use the RAW converter, using Photomerge for panoramas and group shots and finally removing and adding colour. Part four adds artistic value to your photos with brushes and shapes, type, filters, effects, layer styles and gradients.

Done? Then part five shows you how to print your photos or send them to the web. There's also a useful chapter on creating photo projects. Part six looks at using graphics tablets and finding additional resources while part seven covers installation and troubleshooting.

To cater for users at all levels you'll find the *Missing Manual* sidebar staples of Up to Speed for novices and Power Users' Clinic for advanced operators. If Elements is your choice of photo editing software then you should find this book a valuable aid to unlocking its full potential.



Author **Scott Kelby and Matt Kloskowski**
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The Photoshop Elements 6 Book for Digital Photographers

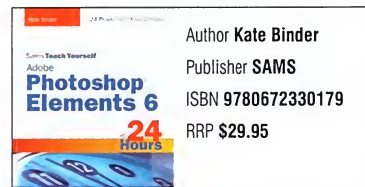
by Scott Kelby and Matt Kloskowski caters for both Mac and Windows users and covers much the same ground but in a different style. Set up and manage your photo collection, unlock the power of Camera Raw, crop and resize, correct colour and deal with problems specific to digital photographs.

Use masks and other selection techniques to access the detail. Retouch faces with some nice examples of photo-cosmetic surgery and learn how to remove unwanted objects from your photos. Master special effects including panoramas, high-contrast portraits, vignetting and background replacement. Experiment with a variety of sharpening techniques.

Exhibit your work (with watermarking and copyright info) as an online gallery, a PDF presentation or a variety of clever and compelling formats. Or use your work in a slideshow, a postcard, a calendar or a disk label.

inally get a handle on calibration and colour management, sample an Elements workflow and link to additional resources.

The style is a little funkier and more off-the-cuff than the previous title. Greater use is made of colour illustrations, the layout is more artistic and the learning style is more example-based. In short, more visually inspiring and more suited to serious photographers.



Author **Kate Binder**
Publisher **SAMS**
ISBN **9780672330179**
RRP **\$29.95**

Sams Teach Yourself Adobe Photoshop Elements 6 in 24 Hours

is yet another approach. Forget the idea of one caffeine-induced all-nighter, this is a series of 24 one-hour lessons to be taken at your own pace. Each lesson chapter opens with a list of what you're about to learn and closes with a summary, a brief Q&A, a workshop section comprising a short quiz (with answers) and one or two short activities for you to practice what has been preached.

Part one gets you used to working with Elements — the workspace, file handling, photo import and organisation, quick fixes, selections, layers, printing and sharing online. Part two deals with simple corrections, while part three deals with rescuing and repairing photos with more serious flaws. Part four has fun with filters, effects, painting and drawing, fashioning composite images and creating books, calendars, cards and such. A cheery tone makes learning enjoyable and a colour gallery of extended images from various lessons adds to the plentiful greyscale illustrations throughout.

Although you can dive in anywhere, this 500-page title is ideally suited to organised folk who like structured learning, delivered in measured doses.

PS. YouTube has a good number of helpful tutorials on Elements 6. A quick search yields lessons on using the Magic Extractor, changing backgrounds, adjusting skin tone and creating black and white art. I also found a series of weekly tips from Australian Philip Andrews. 📺

Hotlinks

tinyurl.com/4ovzrk

Photoshop Elements 6 tutorials on YouTube

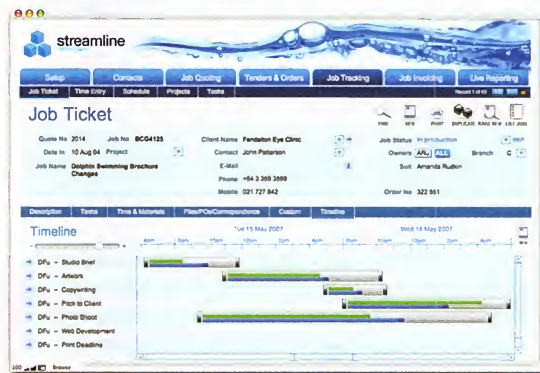
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3. Be smart. Remove your phone's battery first – those things are dangerous.
4. Be responsible. Once your phone is destroyed, hand the remains over to Mobile Muster (<http://www.amta.org.au/aoi.asp?ID=Recycling>) so they can dispose of the materials safely and reclaim anything that can be recycled. Don't send that stuff to landfill.

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You must be registered (free) with macworld.com.au to be eligible for entry.

* Conditions apply. See www.macworld.com.au/iphone-terms



AMW lab: wireless internet routers

No strings attached

Your router is a key part of your network. It allows the various computers and other devices on your LAN to use the internet connection and to access shared resources. It needs to be reliable and not get in the way of your work.

When the first routers hit the consumer market they were difficult to configure and often unreliable. Rebooting a “hung” router was often a daily chore. Since then, a great deal has changed with manufacturers addressing issues of usability and reliability. However, the technical standards to which they conform have also changed with some, such as the 802.11n standard, still in draft.

Purchasing a router can be a tricky business. That’s possibly why many ISPs offer routers with their internet connection contracts. However, if you’re after some specific features then you’ll have to do some research and hit the stores.

Fast Ethernet versus Gigabit. Start by looking at the nature of the internet connection. If you’re an ADSL user then a combined modem/router might be a good idea. It’s one less power supply to connect to the wall and may make the initial set up a little easier. We’d recommend that you look for a unit that supports ADSL 2+. Even if you’re not currently using that level of service you’ll be future proofed if or when you decide to upgrade your service.

Wired connections use a standard called Ethernet. The earliest standard supported connections of 10Mbps and was boosted to 100Mbps a few years later. All routers on the market today support at least 10/100 connections. These are sometimes called “Fast Ethernet”. Over the last 12 months or so, domestic routers have started appearing that support Gigabit Ethernet, or 1000Mbps. If

you’re in the business of moving large files within your network, gigabit Ethernet routers can offer significantly faster file transfers.

Cutting the wires. Where home networking gets tricky is with wireless connections, or WiFi. Wireless networks can transmit data over either the 2.4GHz or 5GHz frequency bands. The original WiFi standard, 802.11b, uses 2.4GHz, as does the later 802.11g. 802.11b can send data at a rated maximum of 11Mbps at a range of about 30 metres (with no walls or other interference). Routers that support 802.11g are backwards compatible with “b” devices but can move data at 54Mbps (provided all devices on the network use 802.11g).

Between the releases of “b” and “g” came 802.11a. It uses the 5GHz frequency and can transmit data at a rated maximum of 54Mbps. Its advantage is that the 5GHz frequency is less congested than 2.4GHz. However, by the time 802.11a was released, 802.11b was so prevalent that it never garnered much market share.

More recently, the 802.11n standard came into play. The IEEE hasn’t yet ratified the final version of this standard but the hardware that will support 802.11n is settled so the final version of the standard should be supported by a simple firmware upgrade to your router. 802.11n supports both the 2.4GHz or 5GHz frequency bands so it’s backwards compatible with all the previous standards. However, not every router comes with radio transmitters for both frequencies. That means you can buy an 802.11n compliant router that only supports 2.4GHz.

Other bits. Finally, there are some other features to look at. Many routers include a USB port for sharing either printers or hard disks. However, if you’ve got a

View your options, make your choices. *Australian Macworld* puts latest-release hardware and software through its paces.

RATINGS KEY

Outstanding ★★★★★

Very good ★★★★

Good ★★★

Flawed ★★

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multifunction printer, the scanning functions aren't likely to be supported through the router. QoS, or Quality of Service, allows traffic on your LAN to be prioritised. If you're using VoIP, this can be used to ensure that phone call quality isn't diminished when you're downloading large files through your internet connection.

One of the challenges with routers is that there are so many to choose from. Rather than compare half a dozen similar devices we've gone for a slightly different approach and will try to cover a cross section of the router market. Each of the units in our rogue's gallery delivers a different balance of features and performance. The routers we've chosen will support the needs of a diverse population as, in our experience, there's no one router that is perfect for everyone.

The Mover. If you've moved home frequently and tried to provision ADSL or some other broadband service you'll know that it can take many days and try your patience. That's where Virgin's Mobile Broadband service comes to the fore. With its customarily cheeky approach – when the router is started the LED message says "You're turning me on" – Virgin has managed to deliver a product that, while not super speedy, can get you up and running on the internet in a short time.

Their service is built around the GlobeSurfer II modem/router. Rather than using an ADSL connection, there's a SIM card on the side and it uses the Optus 3G network (which Virgin resells) to provide an internet connection. There's a single 10/100 Ethernet port and 802.11b/g WiFi.

Set up is easy. Turn the GlobeSurfer II on, connect it to your computer with an Ethernet cable and follow the

simple instructions. As it uses a web browser for set up it's very Mac friendly.

Performance is limited and Virgin blocks peer-to-peer and BitTorrent traffic. However, for web browsing and e-mail, the rated maximum of 512Kbps is adequate. We were able to frequently exceed 300Kbps. Unlike most other 3G services, if you exceed the monthly 2GB traffic cap there are no excess usage charges – your bandwidth is simply shaped back to 64Kbps.

The Sports Car. Linksys's latest routers seem to bear a more than passing resemblance to sports cars. Their sleek black exteriors look more like the front of a Lamborghini than a networking appliance. The WRT310N ticks most of the boxes for a home router with Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11n wireless and a Mac friendly setup tool, the Linksys EasyLink Advisor or LELA.

The Mac version of LELA guides you through the process of configuring the WRT310N using clear English rather than technical jargon. If you're running either Boot Camp or virtualisation software, the Windows version includes a full, graphical network management tool that provides a visual representation of your entire network. A Mac version is promised as "coming soon" but no firm date has been announced. There's a browser based configuration tool as well.

Performance was excellent. File copies between our iMac and MacBook Pro using their Gigabit connections were speedy with a 350MB file taking mere seconds to copy between machines. The WRT310N's wireless range was strong with a full strength connection maintained for about 25 metres. Wireless access is limited to the 2.4GHz band.


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There's no USB port on the WRT310N, which is a little disappointing in such a high-end unit – meaning that you'll need to resort to using file and printer sharing.

The Time Traveller. Apple's Time Capsule has garnered plenty of attention. It's really a combination of two devices – a NAS and a router.

The Time Capsule's spec sheet is certainly impressive with dual band WiFi, Gigabit Ethernet and a USB port for printer and disk sharing. However, it's a little unusual as it only support three wired connections (most routers offer four). Performance was as expected from such a well-equipped unit with 350MB file transfers over Gigabit taking seconds. Wireless range was in excess of 20 metres within a house. Even more impressive is that it achieves this without any antennae poking out of the simple, white body.

Where the Time Capsule varies from other routers is that it contains a hard disk. Our test unit came with a 500GB SATA drive rated at 7200rpm. Once the Time Capsule was on, the drive was instantly visible on our LAN and could be used as either a central storage point or for Time Machine backups. However, we were let down as it can't be used as an iTunes server – a feature many other NAS devices now support.

Setup was very simple through Apple's Airport Utility. Our main complaint with the Time Capsule (and this goes for the Airport Extreme as well) is that it lacks QoS.

The All-Rounder. Billion is one of those companies that's snuck up on its opposition and delivers some great products at very competitive prices. While in some ways (such as software usability) they're a little rough around

the edges, they manage to squeeze lots of features and excellent performance.

The Billion BiPAC 7300N delivers an excellent ADSL2+ modem as well as a four-port router and 802.11n WiFi over the 2.4GHz band. Connecting the 7300N to an ADSL service was simple with the web-browser configuration utility providing easily-located boxes for entering the username and password. We were able to get a connection at the maximum rated connection speed but your ability to do so will vary depending on proximity to the exchange and quality of telephone cabling in your area.

The setup utility was well laid-out but there were few options that were set out in plain English. For example, wireless security options were labeled by their acronyms. We think a better approach would be to use descriptions such as "No security", "Better" and "Best". While Billion isn't alone in this, their routers offer a dazzling array of configuration options that, without the instruction manual, would be incomprehensible unless you were a networking guru.

Wireless range was fair with 15 metres being about the limit of coverage before signal quality started to drop below full strength. That's probably good enough for most homes but might be an issue in double-storey properties.

Wired connections were limited to Fast Ethernet, or 10/100Mbps. Commensurately, file transfers that took seconds with Gigabit routers took minutes. We doubt that this would be a show-stopper in many homes but could be more of an issue in small offices.

The Visionary. The Belkin N1 Vision stands out in a crowd. Rather than the standard short, flat profile of most routers, the N1 Vision stands upright. The face is

dominated by an LED display that provides instant feedback on the number of wireless connections, network speed and other information.

When a computer is connected to the N1 Vision for the first time, the web browser automatically redirects to the set up utility – there's no need to track down the default network address in the documentation. The set up wizard takes you through the various configuration options.

It has to be said that the N1 Vision's pricing puts it very much at the premium end of the market. Performance was excellent with wireless range extending beyond 20 metres before signal strength started to fall away and the Gigabit Ethernet for wired connections ensured that data was moved around our network in quick time.

One feature that we found handy with the N1 Vision was its ability to set up two separate wireless LANs. While the default wireless settings allowed file and printer sharing to proceed easily, there's an option to enable a Guest WLAN. If you have visitors stop by that need to use your internet connection, they can use the Guest LAN to access the internet but they're quarantined from the other machines on the network.

The only feature we found to be missing from the N1 Vision was a USB port for printer and disk sharing.

The Little Fella. SMC has a long tradition in the networking game so it stands to reason that products it delivers are well thought out and designed specifically for the target markets. The Mini Barricade G Router is pitched at the traveler looking to share a network connection quickly and easily. At about the size of a deck of cards, it would take up little space in the luggage and makes it dead easy to create a hotspot directly from an in-room internet connection at a hotel.

In order to maximise the Mini Barricade's portability there's no need to pack a power supply as it can run from a USB port using the supplied cable. There's a power supply included as well so you could, conceivably use the Mini Barricade at home and take it with you when travelling.

Given its tiny footprint, there's just the one LAN port. WiFi is limited to 802.11g but we didn't see this as a major drawback as the Mini Barricade is about portability rather than performance.

Set up was simple. We connected it to the Ethernet port of our test system, launched a web browser and, using the instructions in the Quick Installation Guide, ran the Setup Wizard. While the typeface used in the wizard was a little small, the various options were clearly described in plain English.

There was no point testing wired performance, as there was only one Ethernet port. Wireless range was a handy 15 metres before signal strength started to fall away – more than enough if you're planning to use it in a hotel room or small apartment.

The Max. NewerTechnology doesn't have a retail presence in Australia but that hasn't stopped it from seeing us as a worthwhile market. The MAXPower is a competent, if unspectacular, router that may not light up the world on the spec sheet but, even allowing for overseas shipping for deliver from the US, delivers good bang for buck.

Setup is a very simple affair. We connected an Optus-Net Cable service to the MAXPower directly and had a working internet connection in seconds. The actual unit can be either sat flat on its base or, using the supplied stand, placed upright. This is handy if you want to reduce the MAXPower's footprint. It can also easily be wall mounted with a couple of screws. One thing to note is that the MAXPower doesn't ship with a localised power plug. The power supply can deal with 240v but you'll need an adaptor to plug it into an Australian outlet.

Changing configuration options was simple using a web browser although we did find that some of the CGI scripts used by the set up tool failed when used with Safari. We found Firefox 3 a far more reliable browser with the MAXPower.

The MAXPower has four wired connections that are limited to the 10/100 Fast Ethernet standard. While power users might bypass the MAXPower for that reason, most home users, particularly if shopping for an inexpensive solution, won't be too phased by this. In our testing, we didn't find that the 10/100 connection made a noticeable difference in the retrieval of e-mail or web pages. Moving large files between machines on the network was slower than with Gigabit routers but that was to be expected.

Wireless support is limited to the 2.4GHz band with the most recent draft of 802.11n supported as well as the older "b" and "g" standards. What astounded us was the MAXPower's incredible range. We're used to having manufacturers boast of their superior wireless range but the MAXPower lived up to the claim. We maintained a full strength signal to our MacBook Pro at 40 meters through a single wall. Connectivity dropped away very sharply from that point but this is the first router we've tested that managed to maintain a solid connection at that distance.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. When it comes to the crunch, which would we be prepared to spend our own money on? We really liked the Belkin N1 Vision. Feature-for-feature it's almost the same as the Linksys WRT310N but the availability of Guest Mode tips it over the line for us. However, if wireless range is a significant determining factor then the NewerTechnology MAXRange would come into serious consideration.

That said, for the times when we're on the road and stuck in a hotel room, the SMC Mini Wireless Barricade was just so handy. The fact that it was pocket-sized and only needed a USB cable for power makes it a great addition to the mobile traveller's kitbag. 📦

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Matthew JC. Powell
www.macworld.com.au/iphone/view/iphone-3g-review-525
For a longer version of this review

iPhone 3G

Pretty darn good, but not perfect

Few devices have ever been hyped to the extent of the iPhone. And the extra year and a bit of waiting between when it debuted in the USA and when you can officially buy it in Australia have made the hypestorm all the more intense. It's hard to believe any device can live up to such expectation. So does it? Yes. And, also, no.

Above all, a phone. There's a reason Apple didn't call this device the "iPod phone" or similar. It is, first and foremost, a telephone. And it's a good one.

I had a great deal of difficulty finding anywhere where I couldn't get at least some reception. Even seven levels underground in a carpark lift, I could make and receive phone calls. That's pretty impressive. What's more, the iPhone squeezes the most out of whatever limited signal it can get, so even those deep underground phone calls sounded clear.

Tapping the Phone icon on the touch screen brings up a large standard-format alphanumeric keypad, so you can dial numbers like 133-MAC (which you can't easily do on the BlackBerry's QWERTY keyboard). Once you've dialled, another screen comes up with options to put the call on speaker, mute, hold, add another call or pop out to your Contacts list.

At a touch, you can dial a phone number, send an SMS or an e-mail to anyone in the list.

The speaker is also good and loud, so it's very effective for times when you want to chat without holding onto the phone. And unlike with the BlackBerry, people I spoke to over the speakerphone sometimes couldn't tell I was on speaker.

Internet to go. The other thing the iPhone is noted for is access to the internet wherever you happen to be.

The addition of 3G makes that an even more attractive proposition, at least if you happen to be in a 3G area.

The iPhone comes with a mobile version of Safari pre-installed. Without a doubt it is far superior to any web browser I have ever used on any mobile device. With most mobile devices, even fairly good ones such as the BlackBerry 8300, I've hesitated before breaking out the web browser. Speed and usability have just generally been that poor.

Not on the iPhone.

The touch interface makes the difference here. Using a scrollwheel or a little ball or even a stylus to work your way around a web site just doesn't work as intuitively as grabbing, sliding and tapping.

As well as the web browser, the iPhone comes pre-installed with a number of other applications that make use of mobile data. Before you buy an iPhone, be sure that you're happy with the mobile data component of the plan you're on. Unlike with other phones, you will use it.

Unfortunately, the iPhone can't be used as a modem connected via Bluetooth. It's not a feature I use a lot, but it's handy to have when I need it.

Check your mail. At the moment the king of mobile e-mail is RIM with its BlackBerry platform. The BlackBerry, it's fair to say, is an e-mail device that's had other functionality tacked on the back for good measure. It could similarly be argued that the iPhone's e-mail functionality feels a little bit tacked on.

On the BlackBerry, you have your choice of seeing all your messages from all your accounts (plus SMS) in one big inbox, or having them separated out into separate lists. If you choose the latter, you can go straight to each separate inbox from its own icon on the main screen.

On the iPhone, however, you have to have all your accounts separate, and you access them by clicking on the Mail icon on the main screen. Clicking on that brings up the various different accounts, and you tap the account you want and then tap "Inbox" to see your new messages — three clicks to achieve what you can do on the BlackBerry in one. For a company that prides itself on user interface design, this is a problem.

There are other limitations. You can't mark messages as read without actually reading them — a potential security problem. You can't search your inbox, apply filters or screen out spam. These are the basics for what e-mail should be able to do.

If Apple wants to compete with RIM for the e-mail power-user market it needs to do a lot better than this.

Oh yeah, the iPod. If you've used an iPod touch you know how the iPhone 3G works as an iPod — it's identical. You can search albums in Cover Flow, play videos

in widescreen, buy songs from the iTunes WiFi Store, all that. (You can't purchase songs over a 3G connection. Trust me, that's a good thing.)

One thing the iPhone can do that the iPod touch can't is play music without headphones plugged in. It's got speakers, so why not? The sound quality isn't great, but it can do it.

Like any other iPod, you sync your data with the iPhone via iTunes. Using iTunes you can copy your Address Book, iCal calendars and synchronise Mail folders (presuming you use Apple's Mail) between iPhone and your Mac. Unlike any other iPod though, the data is actually useful to have on an iPhone.

One slight annoyance is that if you've taken any pictures using the iPhone's camera, iPhoto launches as well as iTunes when you plug in the iPhone. It may be too much to ask, but given I can sync iPhoto libraries to iPhone via iTunes, it'd be a whole bunch more elegant to be able to go the other way as well.

In use. The iPhone is more than just a phone, an iPod, a mobile web browser and an e-mail client – it's a unified whole made up of these parts. It's that unity that sets it apart from other devices.


The iPhone is, for want of a better word, fun to use. And that can be a good thing and a bad thing.

The temptation to use the iPhone's data connection heavily is very high. Some users may well find that 250MB or even 500MB plans don't make the cut. And that might mean some very expensive surprises.

My recommendation: whenever possible, use WiFi (Telstra and Optus both offer free access to their wireless hotspots) and switch off 3G (in Settings > General > Network). You'll save some money on data, get faster access, and the batteries last longer.

Speaking of batteries, the 3G chipset eats them like popcorn. And since you can't swap in an extra battery as with pretty much every other phone ever made, you need to be a bit conservative. In normal usage I found I could barely get a day out of a single charge.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. I like the iPhone 3G. For all its quirks and things that it could do better, it's a pleasure to use. It's as good a phone as I've ever used, a better internet browser than I've yet seen on a mobile device, and of course as an iPod it's, well, an iPod. Its weakness is in its e-mail client. Hopefully either Apple will either improve that soon or let someone else step in.

The big gotcha is the data plans, so shop around carefully before deciding on a provider. 



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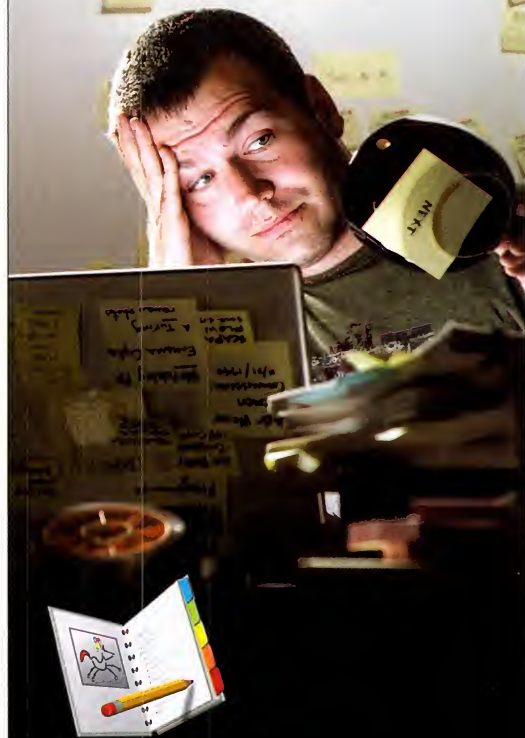
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Remote for iPhone

Must-have app for iPhone users

It's no surprise that Apple's Remote application headed up the App Store's list of Top Free Apps immediately after the iPhone application store launched. After installing Remote on an iPhone or iPod touch, the portable's touchscreen becomes the best remote control I've yet seen for controlling an Apple TV – or iTunes running on a computer – located on the same local network. (Your iPhone or iPod touch must be connected to that network via WiFi.)

When you first launch the Remote application on your iPhone or iPod touch, you need to complete a one-time pairing procedure in order to choose which iPhone or iPod touch controls which Apple TV or which copy of iTunes. In the Remote program, you tap on Add Library, which displays a four-digit passcode on the screen. Then you select your iPhone or iPod touch on the Apple TV's new Remotes screen (in Settings > General), or in iTunes' Devices list, and enter the passcode. You have to perform this simple procedure only once for each device with which you want to pair; launching the Remote program in the future automatically connects the iPhone or iPod touch to your Apple TV or to iTunes as long as you're connected to the local WiFi network. You can even pair with



multiple devices and then choose which you want to control when you launch Remote.

When controlling an Apple TV or iTunes using Remote, your iPhone or iPod touch's screen looks much like the mobile version of iTunes. At the bottom of the screen are Playlist, Artists, Albums, Search, and More buttons; the latter displays a screen with Audiobooks, Composers, Genres, Movies, Music Videos, Podcasts, Songs, and TV Shows – you actually get more options here than you do in mobile iTunes.

After choosing a category, you browse your iTunes or Apple TV library just as if you were browsing the media contents of your iPhone or iPod touch – by flicking your finger up or down and tapping to make a selection. Choosing an album, track, podcast, or video begins playback; cover art is displayed on a Now Playing screen, just as if you were listening to audio on the iPod or iPod touch. You can even rate tracks when using Remote with iTunes.

If you're wondering how well Remote lets you "scrub" through media, the answer depends on what you're used to. The procedures are essentially the same as those on an iPhone or iPod touch: you tap-and-hold on the Back or Forward buttons to scan back or forward, respectively, within the current track, or you tap the Now Playing screen to manually position the playhead on the onscreen progress bar. Which means that in-track navigation using Remote is considerably better than using the Apple TV's physical remote control, but is sorely lacking in precision compared to the scrub feature of Click Wheel iPods or the mouse-cursor-positioned progress bar of iTunes on your computer.

A great feature found in Remote that's not available in iTunes on the iPhone or iPod touch is Search. Tap in a few letters and you instantly get a list of all content – artist names, tracks, movies, etc. – containing the search phrase. Tap on a track or video to play it, or tap on an artist or album to browse its contents. Remote even remembers your last search, so you don't lose your results if you switch to another screen. Why isn't this a standard feature?

Remote works well with iTunes, but it's a godsend for Apple TV – especially if, like me, you've got a massive music collection. With the exception of Shuffle mode, I'd given up listening to music on my Apple TV because of the painfully-slow music navigation. With Remote, finding and playing any track in my library is easier than with any device or remote I've used. And I can do it from anywhere in or around my house.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The biggest shortcoming of Remote is that you can't use it to browse the iTunes Store. For playing media already on your Apple TV or in iTunes, Remote is tough to beat. 

Type	TopXNotes 1.3
Rating	Note-taking utility
Pros	★★★★
Cons	QuickNotes feature
OS X	Some interface quirks
SRP	10.3, 10.4, 10.5
Publisher	\$US35
Distributor	Tropical Software
Reviewer	Available online
Hot links	Philip Michaels
	www.tropic4.com/

TopXNotes 1.3

Sets itself apart from the pack

There's a surplus of quality note takers available for the Mac, each with their share of strengths and special features. So why do I favor TopXNotes from Tropical Software? Well, like many of the top apps in this category, it offers the kind of features you'd expect from a basic note-taking application. It's got a clean, single-window interface that puts controls for highlighting and marking up your text right at your fingertips.

But what sets TopXNotes apart is its QuickNotes feature. Designate a note as a QuickNote, and you can access it from the drop-down menu of a floating palette that always appears on top of other applications. That lets you open notes quickly, without having to toggle through other apps or lose sight of the window you're working in.


Other valuable TopXNotes features include the ability to group related notes together, open multiple notes at once, and view notes organised by group or category in the application's NoteOrganizer window.

Other valuable TopXNotes features include the ability to group related notes together, open multiple notes at once, and view notes organised by group or category in the application's NoteOrganizer window. Fans of security will appreciate the ability to password-protect specific notes or to set read-only privileges.

I prefer to create a new note and just start typing, but for users who prefer some guidance, TopXNotes provides 13 templates for common note-types like shopping lists, directions, and receipts where you start typing in your own information. For a basic application, TopXNotes also offers some useful formatting tools, allowing you to set the size, style, colour, and font of your note. I particularly like the options for highlighting text in different colours, as it helps me better organise the information in a given note.

Fans of security will appreciate the application's password protection features. You can apply passwords to specific notes as well as set read-only privileges. You can also set a password that appears when TopXNotes launches to keep unwanted visitors from rifling through your notes.

The program is not without its quirks. Hitting 'Command'-P will print every note you've stored in the application; if you want to print a specific note, you need to instead click on the Print Note icon affiliated with that note. It took me several printing attempts – and a lot of wasted paper, unfortunately – before I figured this out.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. TopX-Notes' conveniences more than make up for its quirks. If you're in the market for a lean, mean note-taker, TopX-Notes lets you jot your thoughts down without a lot of distractions. 

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Type	Digital still camera.
Rating	★★★★
Pros	10.1 megapixels, 18x optical zoom
Cons	Unable to fire external flash; LCD screen cannot be tilted
SRP	\$599
Manufacturer	Nikon
Distributor	Nikon Australia 1300 366 499
Reviewer	Barrie Smith
Hot links	www.nikon.com.au

Nikon Coolpix P80
Digital still camera.
★★★★
10.1 megapixels, 18x optical zoom
Unable to fire external flash; LCD screen cannot be tilted
\$599
Nikon
Nikon Australia 1300 366 499
Barrie Smith
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Nikon Coolpix P80

Startling at the price

Capturing 10.1 megapixels, the Nikon Coolpix P80 weighs about 400 grams and is relatively tiny when compared to a true dSLR, yet it sports a lens that no interchangeable lens camera has yet delivered – nor could the average person afford it. The 18x zoom equates to 27-486mm in SLR-speak; the camera is stabilised, thanks to a shifting CCD scheme – you wouldn't want to hold a camera with a lens close to 500mm without one.

The camera is ergonomically sound: you can firmly hold the camera, thanks to its rubberised surface; the power button, command and mode dials are close to the thumb while the shutter button and zoom lever are near the forefinger.

Capable of advanced photography, the P80 has five exposure modes: auto, Program AE, shutter and aperture priority and manual – plus 15 scene modes.

The maximum image size is 3648x2736 pixels; from this you can enjoy a 41x31 cm print. When you need to shoot at a continuous rate (4, 6, 13fps) the maximum image size is 2048x1536 pixels.

There is a large rear 6.9cm screen plus a turret viewfinder, the latter being a small LCD and nearly OK to assess focus, exposure etc. Thankfully there is also a face-detection mode that makes part of that job easier. Sensitivity stretches from 64 to 6400 ISO – so you can shoot in near total darkness, if you don't mind a little noise. It accepts SD and higher capacity SDHC cards.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. I found the P80's images startlingly sharp, with excellent colour quality. It's very hard to beat at the price.



Pentax K20D Digital SLR
Digital SLR
★★★★ 1/2
Generous continuous speed options; CMOS-based stabiliser; bright menu display
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Pentax K20D Digital SLR

Idiot-proof dSLR

Weighing a kilo, with kit lens attached, the metal-bodied Pentax K20D feels strong yet easy in the hand, thanks to a tactile body shape and a non-slip surface.

The half frame sized CMOS sensor has 14.6 million pixels, building a 4672x3104 pixel maximum image. Expect a massive 53x35 cm print at 225 dpi. The camera captures in RAW or JPEG and RAW+JPEG, saved in Pentax's proprietary PEF format or Adobe DNG.

The shake reduction system uses a free-floating sensor, meaning any lens can be accommodated. This promises an extra 2.5 to 4 stops in terms of shutter speed. The pentaprism viewfinder is supplemented by a 6.9cm LCD that provides the usual menu options plus a Live View function that displays the image while you're shooting – and monitor the effect of shake reduction.

A special coating on the CMOS repels dust particles, supplemented by a high speed shaking action that forces particles to fall onto an adhesive sheet lower in the unit. A dust alert function warns of particles on the sensor.

Other idiot-proofing functions include one that expands the dynamic range to help avoid over-exposed areas with an approximate boost of one f stop and a custom function that tailors hue, colour saturation, contrast and sharpness.

Getting around the camera's external controls is easy.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The K200 is an excellent mid level DSLR that beats most other dSLRs at the price. It will sit happily in a keen enthusiast's or pro's kit bag.



Type	RapidWeaver 4.0
Rating	Web publishing application
Pros	★★★★ 1/2
Cons	Inexpensive; easy to use; fast; supports a variety of page types; theme-based approach enables instant customisation
OS X	Blog commenting requires external hosting; power users could find themes limiting
SRP	10.5
Publisher	\$US79; upgrade from version 3.6, free; upgrade from previous versions, \$US30
Distributor	Realmac Software
Reviewer	Available online
Hot links	Tim Haddock
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RapidWeaver 4.0

Takes the pain out of web publishing


Thanks to Realmac Software's RapidWeaver 4.0, you won't need a master of fine arts degree with a minor in computer programming to build a web site that will do your content proud.

Does RapidWeaver live up to its name? Let's put it this way: Within an hour of installing the software, I posted a pretty darn handsome personal web site, complete with a photo album and a podcast I had that needed a good home, plus file sharing, a video gallery, an RSS feed, a feedback form, and the beginnings of a blog.

RapidWeaver really excels in its use of themes or templates. My biggest paranoia about template-based design programs is that eventually every web site starts to look the same. But thanks to RapidWeaver's open architecture, which encourages designers to create new themes, that's not much of an issue.

Program workflow is simple. Starting in Edit mode, just click the Add Page button, and paste or type your text into a blank white field with the aid of standard word processing formatting tools. Drag in your images, set text wrapping, and add links. Then, switch to Preview mode for the real fun, and instantly toggle among variations of your page within 40 provided themes.

RapidWeaver is also a capable blogging tool, with all the requisite auto-archiving and RSS capabilities. One element that might turn off some users, however, is that to enable commenting – the heart of social media – you have to register with, Haloscan, an external commenting service.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. RapidWeaver 4.0 strikes just the right balance between customisability and ease of use. 

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Pacemaker

Feel the beat

As a Mac/iPod/iPhone user, one gets used to stylish gear. So when a new piece of audio equipment arrives that engenders the same stylistic impact, I get very interested in spending time with it. The Pacemaker is easily one of the funkiest pieces of hardware I've used. What's even better is it's also one of the most creative pieces I've laid hands on.

It's about the decks. My first hour with the Pacemaker was frankly very frustrating. The supplied instructions are at best perfunctory and at worst near unreadable. Thankfully, this oversight is remedied online with a superb set of tutorials. Once I'd watched a handful, things fell into place for me. The Pacemaker is a miniature pair of turntables and mixer, a touch screen interface with direct connection to your Mac and it records your mixes as well.

The poor instructions meant it took me a while to work out I needed to download the Editor application from the Pacemaker web site to get started. It's the conduit between your Mac and the Pacemaker. MP3, M4A (AAC-LC), AIFF, FLAC, WAV, Ogg Vorbis and SND formats are supported.

It's a shame the Editor isn't more Mac-like – I found its interface clumsy and at times downright frustrating. The functionality to create mixes within the Editor is all there but compared to other DJ applications on the market it struggles to compete.

The whole workflow revolves around the DJ analogy of a left and right deck and crossfading between the two or mixing them together. All this is achieved from the touch pad at the bottom and the results are displayed on the top section – a big thumbs up for the display quality too.

The touch pad is similar to the old iPod clickwheel, although there are many more combinations to learn. A double-tap in the middle brings up the playlist you've transferred from your Mac via the Editor application.



Once a song is playing, a tap and drag to the left adjusts the volume, a tap and drag up adjusts treble and so on. Like a traditional DJ rig you can route audio to both your headphones and a line out which allows you to preview your mix before it hits the audience's ears. The 3.5mm stereo jack isn't the perfect solution for a professional but for the rest of us it's more than adequate. The visual feedback for the operator (a pulsing blob on the active channel) is useful and feels natural from the get-go. Crossfading is also a tactile experience of dragging a finger from one channel to another. You'll quickly realise the importance of the P-Switch on the left side of the Pacemaker as holding it up gives you a range of other parameters – think of it like a Function key.

Another crucial part of DJing is looping sections of audio and the Pacemaker allows you to set punch in and out points for loops, to split the loop from the in-point and out point, to exit and even re-enter the loop. On the effects and EQ side of the equation, there's a 3-band equaliser plus roll, echo, reverb and hi-cut/lo-cut effects – all operated from the touch pad.

Tempo and beat. The core of any DJ solution is its ability to match tempo and individual beats. You wouldn't think hardware the size of the Pacemaker would be a great solution for fine audio work but once you've conquered the interface it's actually quite simple to do so – particularly if your music tastes keep within common time signatures. Dynamic beat detection has a 0.1 BPM precision and pitch and speed can be altered 100 percent in either direction. Once your mix is done, you can publish it to the Pacemaker DJ web site via the Editor to share with others.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're seriously into the DJ experience, you'll want to take a very serious look at the Pacemaker – its mobility and feature set make it a very desirable piece of kit indeed. If you're just exploring the area, \$999 is a lot of money to spend on something that has a fair learning curve and that may cause some frustration.



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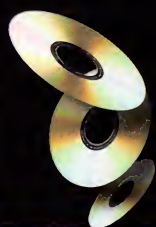
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Alex Kidman is waiting patiently for Oscar the Grouch to pop out of the Trash can.

Are you sure?

Can technology be allergic to you?

Every once in a while, some poor soul will pop up on the news with a terrible allergy to modern living. They break out in hives around plastic, have difficulty breathing near telephones, and power lines give them massive headaches. I feel sorry for such people — not only are the afflictions painful to bear, but they're also terribly isolating, as so much of modern living revolves around technology.

I'm beginning to wonder, however, if technology isn't starting to pick up on the trend of people being allergic to it, and fighting back by being allergic to people. What's more, the anti-tech allergy might just be contagious. And I might just have it.

In the last fortnight, the tech virus struck me twice. I was browsing the local ABC shop — I'm a big fan of our national broadcaster — and picked up a gift for my wife's birthday. Well, I tried to — but attempting to pay for the purchase brought down the store's computer systems. The purchase had gone through the credit machine, but wasn't recorded on their systems, so they couldn't give me a receipt for the goods — but they'd charged me for them. To make matters worse, when they called the bank to reverse the first charge, the bank's systems went down.

Now, once might just be unfortunate, but a week later I headed back

— at least partly because the first card payment hadn't been refunded yet — when a cheap Dr Who CD caught my eye (I'm also a sucker for the sadly-audio-only exploits of Pat Troughton, but that's a story for another day). So while the staff are busy working out the initial transaction blunder, I decide to buy myself something. Bad move. Same store. Same cash register. And exactly the same reproducible error, although I think the staff went an even redder apologetic shade this time.

For more than a decade, I've been attending press launches for events, and it's always seemingly been the mantra that you can't have a product demo without something going wrong. I just never realised that it happens when I attend them.

The severity varies — I recall the "official" launch of Windows Vista included a massively malfunctioning projector that the comedian/host Hamish Blake offered to "take down to Circular Quay and kick the crap out of" because it just wouldn't work. Although in that case, perhaps the projector was just trying to warn us all about Vista.

I've also seen handhelds stop working entirely, storage devices have their power supplies go up in curiously blue smoke and thermal photo printers that would print only in yellow. Sure, I told myself, it's weird, but that's just the perils of early adoption, and the privilege of seeing things first-hand before all the bugs have been ironed out. Well, either that, or the individual bits of



technology hated me so much that they stopped working out of spite — which was always my relative's claim.

Now, though, I'm not so sure, and Apple is at the heart of it. With the company mantra of "it just works", I would have figured that Apple's gear was either resistant to the virus — if it is a virus — or just not mean-spirited enough to stop working altogether. But in the past twelve months, I've seen Back to my Mac go back to no Macs. I've seen iPods self-brick in my presence. I've seen Time Machines forget what day it is. And the list goes on.

The tech virus doesn't even know geographical boundaries; at this year's Macworld Expo keynote, Steve Jobs couldn't get Flickr photo sharing working. I was in the audience. Coincidence? I'm beginning to think not. And if I'm capable of breaching Apple's generally well-built technology walls, anything could happen. So if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go see what's currently hot in cave living for all of our sakes. ☞

[Editor's note: Alex was sitting next to me in the Expo keynote, when my 3G internet dongle from Optus failed to function, thus requiring me to do our live blog via SMS. I think there's something to this. — M.JC.P]

Hotlinks

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electrical_sensitivity

Proof that Wikipedia has an article on everything

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minor_characters_from_The_Hitchhiker%27s_Guide_to_the_Galaxy

Rob McKenna had the precipitation version of this problem

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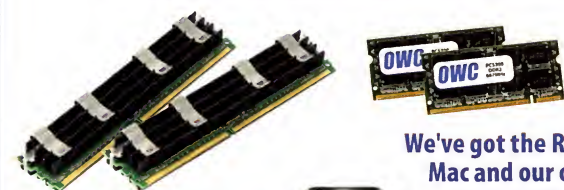
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Photoshop® CS3 Results

RAM Configuration	Stock 2.0GB 2048MB (2x 1024)	OWC Powered 4.0GB 4096MB (2x 2048)
MacBook® Pro 15" (Mid/Late 2007) 2.2 GHz Core™ 2 Duo (4MB L2 Cache)	122.37 seconds	Only 85.15 seconds! 30% faster
MacBook Pro 15" (Early 2008) 2.6 GHz Core 2 Duo (6MB L2 Cache)	102.50 seconds	Only 72.94 seconds! 29% faster

This benchmark measures the time (in seconds) it takes to execute a custom 21-step action script using Adobe® Photoshop CS3.

Lower times are better.

"RAM Hog" Results

RAM Configuration	Stock 2.0GB 2048MB (2x 1024)	OWC Powered 4.0GB 4096MB (2x 2048)
MacBook Pro 15" (Mid/Late 2007) 2.2 GHz Core 2 Duo (4MB L2 Cache)	297.68 seconds	Only 84.97 seconds! 350% faster
MacBook Pro 15" (Early 2008) 2.6 GHz Core 2 Duo (6MB L2 Cache)	250.28 seconds	Only 76.50 seconds! 327% faster

This benchmark times how long it takes to run our standard 21-step Photoshop action script in Photoshop CS3 when 50% of the installed RAM is taken up with another program.

Lower times are better.

Mac Pro Up to 32.0GB



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